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SERMONS TO CHILDREN.

Sermons to Children.

BY THE

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Twelfth Impression.

London:

34, S[illegible]

IMPORTED BY
THOMAS WHITTAKER,
2 & 3 BIBLE HOUSE,
NEW YORK

1904.

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PREFACE.

If I do not greatly err, in preaching to children, the best possible models are Æsop's Fables. The truth the teacher desires to impress on the minds of his little hearers should not occupy nakedly the major portion of his address, but be appended to the story as a Moral. In addressing adults, educated adults, at least, it is different,—the illustration should garnish the theme.

S. BARING-GOULD.

E. Mersey Rectory,
Colchester,
F. Purification, 1879

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SERMON I.

PREPARING FOR CHRIST.

(ADVENT.)

PSALM CXXXII. 17.

"I have ordained a lamp for mine Anointed."

WHO is the Anointed One spoken of here, for whom David prepared a lamp? I am sure, children, you will have no difficulty whatever in answering me,—Christ. You know that the name "Christ" means "anointed." It is the name given to Jesus, because He is set apart to be our Prophet, or Teacher of Righteousness, our Priest, offering sacrifice for us, and our King, ever reigning over us.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they "may see your good works, and glorify your Father "which is in heaven." What Christ says is much the same as what David says of himself that he did. Let the light shine to the glory of God. Why did David compose his Psalms, and set them to music on his

harp? For Christ. The Psalms are full of Christ, because the heart of David was full of Christ. He looked forward, he longed for the day of Christ's appearing. Because he waited, and watched, and hoped, and prayed for Christ, he ordained—that is, made ready—a lamp for his Anointed.

You remember the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins. As Christ, the Bridegroom, appears in the darkness of the night, each wise virgin steps forth from her chamber, and holding up her flickering light that she has watched and trimmed, exclaims with joy, "I have prepared a lamp for my Christ!" And so they fall into the procession, and pass into the banqueting hall after the Bridegroom.

Last winter I was in an old German town. On Christmas Day in the morning, at four o'clock, there was a celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the Cathedral. The building was vast, lofty, and solemn. It was quite dark when I went to it, and the wind was whistling through the carved, stone battlements, and the snow was falling out of the starless sky; only a very feeble glimmer shone through the stained glass of the minster windows into the market place, where the snow began to whiten the ground, and a shivering sentinel paced up and down before the guard house. When I got

inside, the great Church was quite dark, except for the candles on the altar which were burning, for there was no provision made for lighting it But by degrees the people came in, and each had brought a little wax taper, a little twisted coil of yellow, or white, or red wax, and the end was lighted and uncoiled as wanted. Little by little, as the people arrived, the light began to spread through the vast building from their tiny sparks of candles; at last the great Cathedral was full from end to end, and twinkling everywhere, down the nave, behind the pillars, along the aisles, in the transepts, all round the choir, with more than a thousand lights. That great multitude was assembled to meet their Christ, to hail Him born of Mary, laid in a manger; they had come to pray to their Christ, to sing praises to their Christ, to kneel to, to adore their Christ, and for their Christ they had prepared their feeble lights.

My dear children, I ould like you to take to heart the ext I have given you, as I have interpreted it, "I have prepared a lamp for my Christ."

During life your object should be to have your lamp burning for your Christ. The Church of God on earth, like the Cathedral I have been telling you of, is lighted by the little lamps of the disciples of

Christ, by the burning sparks of those who love their Lord, and await His coming.

When you were baptized, it was as though an angel took fire from off the heavenly altar, and touched your souls therewith, and at once the flame of a spiritual life sprang up. Your bodies are little lanterns, and your souls, kindled by God, are the burning and shining lights within. The soul fed by the oil of Grace shines forth beautifully, and gives light to men, and is bright and pleasing in the sight of God. If you do not pray and ask for grace, then the flame of the spiritual life within you grows dull and dies out, as you have seen a lamp expire when not fed with oil.

You see the flame of a lamp grow lurid and turn to smoke when ash or dirt clogs the wick. The wick cannot burn, the flame cannot be clear, the light cannot be pure, unless the obstruction be removed. Well, every sin is like a bit of dirt or ash in the flame of your spiritual life, and when this is the case, you must never rest till you have cleansed your conscience from the evil which is choking it. How dull and offensive is a lamp that smokes, it goes on blackening the glass, till it gives out no more light. So it is with you, if you continue in sin, your light no longer burns clear.

Your brow becomes cloudy, your cheerfulness goes, you become sullen, ill-natured, self-willed, peevish, quarrelsome, disagreeable to all who have to do with you Whenever you find you are making yourself unpleasant to those who surround you, think that you are a smoky lamp, and make haste to clear your conscience, that your light may shine forth once more before men.

It is not very difficult for you to find out when you are not shining with a steady and clear light. If you see that your play-fellows avoid you, because you mar their merriment, because you will not join in their games, but want to have them do what you wish, whether they like it or not, or because you torment and hurt them—then you may be sure you are a smoky lamp.

If you find that you are causing anxiety and distress to your parents, that they do not seem easy in their minds about you, but are disappointed, and have often to rebuke you, then I suspect you are a smoky lamp.

If you find that you have no delight in the things of God, no love for Him, no interest in anything about God, then there is, I fear, little oil in the lamp.

If you feel no heart for your prayers, if the hymns

awake no joy in your souls, if noble and good examples, if noble and good acts do not stir you, if the beauty of God's creation does not make your heart glow with love and delight, then there is little oil in the lamp.

Now what you must all try to do, is to keep your lamps burning through life, that is, to keep your spiritual nature awake, alight and shining. You will find now, and more so, as you grow older, when there are many worldly cares and pleasures to divert and occupy your attention, that you forget about the little flame of spiritual life, and so do not train and feed it.

Imagine a man in a lighthouse who has to keep the lamp burning to warn ships off the rocks. Well, it is summer weather, and he fishes, and gets so tired catching fish, that he forgets the lamp, and leaves it untrimmed. Or he finds a collection of amusing story books in the lighthouse, and he gets so engrossed in them, that he neglects to feed the lamp, and so it goes out.

You are not required to spend all your time about your lamp. It does not need poking at, and trimming every hour, but it demands occasional and regular attendance.

It is quite enough if you are careful about your

prayers and other religious duties, and do not allow your worldly cares and pleasures to make you neglect them. There is a time for everything, and a place for everything.

It is for your Christ that you keep your lamp burning: for His honour and glory. It is for Him that your little spark shines in and illumines His Church. It is for Him that it beams brightly.

Think how blessed it would be, at the Last Day when He comes to judge the world, and the trumpet sounds, and the angel calls, "Behold, the Bride-groom cometh; go ye out to meet Him;" that you should be able to step forth from your graves and say, "I have prepared a lamp for my Christ!" What a glad and glorious procession that will be of faithful ones following Him with their lights burning, through the night, up, up, to the gate of Heaven, and in there, where all individual lights will be swallowed up in the dazzling splendour of that kingdom that needeth not sun, nor moon, nor candle to illumine it.

SERMON II.

THE TWO IDEALS

(CHRISTMAS.)

S. LUKE II. 14.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

CHRISTMAS Day! The day of hollyboughs with their scarlet berries decorating the Church, and stuck about in your homes, over the pictures, on the chimneypiece, everywhere. The day of good cheer, of interchange of good wishes, of kindly greetings, of affectionate words. The day of drawing closer the ties of relationship and of friendship, and of remembering the poor, and dealing out kindnesses to all. The day of bells joyously ringing, of carols gaily sung, of Churches filled with happy faces and thankful hearts, of the altar spread with fine linen, in honour of the Word made Flesh.

It seems to me that just as there is an abundance

of beautiful presents hanging on the Christmas tree, so there is an abundance of beautiful lessons that hang from Christmas. And I have some hesitation about which to choose, and which, my children, to give to you. However, on former feasts of the Nativity you have been told of the humility of Christ, in thus abasing Himself to become Man, of the love of Christ in taking upon Him our flesh to redeem us, of the doctrine of the Incarnation, the union of the two natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, into one Christ, of the glory that is due to God for having sent His Son into the world, of the peace on earth wrought by the Incarnation, of the good will manifested toward us by our Maker, and Redeemer, and Sanctifier. So now I will take quite another topic, one I think that has not been touched on before. I will show you two men at the same time, governed by two ideas, and how they carried out their ideas, and what the results were.

One of these men is Augustus, the Emperor of Rome, the other is the Man Christ Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth.

Now what do you suppose was the governing idea that filled the mind of Augustus? Listen to his story.

Rome was at one time a Republic, and it had a

famous general, Julius Cæsar, who, as you know, conquered Britain. Some of the people in Rome were suspicious of Julius Cæsar; they thought, as he was at the head of the army, that he would take advantage of his power to upset the government, and make himself head of the state so a conspiracy was formed, and he was murdered. Great confusion followed this crime. But Julius Cæsar had a nephew named Octavius, and a friend named Mark Anthony, and these two united with an old officer called Lepidus, of the army of Julius Cæsar, to punish the conspirators. Octavius was a cold-hearted, crafty young man of eighteen. He thought in his own mind that he must use the other two for his own purpose, to crush his enemies, and to destroy all the supporters of the old government, so that the whole of the power should get into the hands of these three. Then Octavius resolved that he would find some means of making away with Mark Anthony and Lepidus, so that all the known world might fall into his own power. These three men drew up long lists of those whom they feared, and had them put to death. It was not only their enemies who thus died, but many of those whose lands or wealth they coveted, and among these were young children, whose estates had excited their avarice

Distrust, terror, and bloodshed prevailed throughout Italy. After a while Octavius got rid of Lepidus, and when he felt himself strong enough, he picked a quarrel with Mark Anthony, fought against him, and defeated him, and Mark Anthony killed himself rather than fall into the hands of Octavius. Octavius now found himself master of the Roman world. He took the name of Augustus, which signifies something sacred or set apart, like a temple, and made himself Emperor. He took into his own hands the powers of all the magistrates, and became absolute monarch—he was the first Roman Emperor

Now see what this man had set before him from early youth as his leading principle, his great ambition, the idea on which he moulded his actions.

He thought to himself *I* will be the head of everything. All power shall be gathered together into *my* hands. The armies shall fight and conquer to increase *my* kingdom, to enhance *my* glory The people shall no longer be free, and allowed to appoint their own magistrates, *I* will be the fountain of all authority; all officers, and magistrates, and governors shall represent *me*, and act in *my* name, and exercise their jurisdiction only because *I* give it them. The whole world shall be a great circle, and *I* shall be its centre, all its honours and glories

shall come to *me*. The world shall do *me* homage, the fleets shall bring *me* the tribute of foreign climes. All that there is in the world that is costly, beautiful and to be desired, shall become *my* spoil. The world shall be but one vast tributary to *my* lust of power and pleasure.

In one word—the idea of Augustus was to make all the world the minister of SELF. That was his theory. That was the theory on which the Roman Empire was founded, and on which the ensuing Roman Emperors acted. It was the theory of Government Augustus had set up, and on which his successors entered.

Now look into one corner of this great Empire, in the reign of this same Cæsar Augustus. At Bethlehem the Son of God became Incarnate. At Nazareth He was brought up in His fosterfather's shop. In the boyish mind of Jesus one great idea reigned, He, like Octavius, had got his theory of life and Empire. And what was it?

It was exactly the reverse of that of Augustus at every point. He was about to go among men, and to found a kingdom, but how? *By self-sacrifice.*

The leading idea of Christ Jesus was, not to make self the centre to which everything must conduce, to which every one must be sacrificed, but

to sacrifice self, self-love, self-pride, self-will, comfort, pleasure, life even *for others*. At Nazareth He worked, not for self, but for Joseph and His Mother. When He went out on His ministry, He went to impart to men His lesson—self sacrifice for others. He hungered and thirsted *for others*. He laboured and suffered *for others*, He manifested His divine power, not for self-assertion, but for the healing or convincing of others. He gathered about Him apostles, as foundation-stones of His kingdom, but it was for the sake of others, as He was about to withdraw from His kingdom, out of sight, till the fulness of time. He prayed *for others*, He sweated drops of blood, endured agony *for others*, He was betrayed, scourged, denied, crowned with thorns, stripped of His raiment, nailed to the tree of scorn, died *for others*. He rose from the grave *for others*. He ascended into Heaven *for others*. He rose to become the first-fruits of them that slept. He ascended into Heaven to prepare a place for us. He sent the Holy Ghost—still thinking of and loving others, when He Himself was in Glory.

See you, dear children, what a contrast this is to the life of Augustus, and what a contrast of purposes.

Now what has been the working out of these two ideals?

The Empire of Rome, built up on selfishness, is no more. It is gone utterly. It broke to pieces and fell away, and its place knoweth it not.

The Empire of Jesus Christ built up on self-sacrifice exists still. As the empire of selfishness crumbled to ruin, the empire of self-sacrifice grew strong and spread. The Roman Empire exists only as a name in history. The Church of Christ lives and increases daily.

Now, children! What is the idea you have set before you in life? Is it that of Augustus, or that of Jesus? Is it self-glorification, or self-sacrifice?

Do you set before you as your ambition, to do everything for self, to make the world serve self, to draw out of it money for self, and pleasure for self, and subserviency to self?

If so, then you, in your little way, are an Augustus. You have his theory of life. And you will find out in the end that your empire of self-seeking will utterly fail and fall.

But do you, on the other hand, desire to use this world without abusing it, to make your life one of utility to others, to employ your opportunities, whatever they are, in alleviating distress, in removing ignorance, in helping the weak, in raising the fallen, in doing something to relieve the suffer-

ings of your fellow creatures, something to lighten their lives, to bring smiles back to sad faces, and dry despairing tears? Why then your idea is that of Christ. You have the true Christian theory of life. And you will find out in the end that your empire of self-devotion will stand and extend.

As you grow up you will find that this world needs all the self-sacrifice that men can give to better it. It is full of dark places—made dark by those who follow the idea of Augustus, ruining others for their own advancement and pleasure. It is full of wounds—dealt by those who follow the idea of Augustus, exhibiting their power by despotic injustice. Society will need all of you, little Christians, to go forth into the midst of it as light bearers, illuminating its dark places, as physicians, healing its wounds.

SERMON III.

TIDINESS.

S. JOHN VI. 12.

"*Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*"

WHO is this who gives such a command? Is it a poor widow who has no food, and is obliged to gather together the crusts and crumbs of to-day's meal to serve for the morrow, not knowing where elsewhere to look for food?

Or is it Lazarus, lying at the gate of the rich man, who desires to be fed with the fragments from the banquet, and entreats the servants to collect them, and give them to him, being himself unable to work for a living, and too loathsome an object to dare venture into the hall of Dives to gather for himself the rich morsels?

No! the words came from the mouth of Jesus. He had performed a great miracle, had fed five thousand with five barley loaves and two small

fishes. In the hands of his apostles the bread had been multiplied, so that these few loaves had satisfied many. Christ had shown His Divine power, had shown that He could give in abundance to all who need. Why, then, does He add this command? Is His power exhausted, so that He can do no more miracles, and must save the crumbs for another day? Not so. He has no need of the fragments that remain. There is no necessity to Him that they should be collected, and that nothing should be lost. No! For our sakes the command was given. He ordered the crusts to be taken up and collected in baskets, instead of being left to lie about upon the grass, and be trodden into the earth by the feet of the multitude, to teach us a lesson. And that lesson is a double one—economy and tidiness.

God gives us His good things in abundance, and then He expects us to economise them. And this holds true of things spiritual as well as material. This applies to daily grace as well as to daily bread.

God is a ready giver. He openeth His Hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness, but He expects of His rational creatures that they shall show their knowledge that He is the giver of their good things by receiving them with thankfulness, and treating them with respect. In Germany,

if a child throws a piece of bread down on the floor, the father or mother makes it pick up the bread, and kiss it, saying, "It is God's gift."

Wastefulness is wrong, because it shows a disregard for what God has given us. Now, curiously enough, it is a fact that those who have least, those who live from hand to mouth, are generally more wasteful than those who have good things, and things necessary, regularly supplied to them. In London I have noticed that it is in the most squalid, wretched, poverty-stricken districts, that crusts of bread are to be found lying about in the gutters. It is precisely in those parts where the poor live in a hand-to-mouth manner, having much to-day and nothing to-morrow, that wastefulness is most common. When they have plenty they do not know what to do with the abundance: they are improvident, they throw it away, and never dream of laying by for the morrow.

Of course, one would suppose that those who have their bread given them every day would be wasteful. So they are sometimes, no doubt; but the people who are pre-eminently wasteful are those who get plenty to eat one day, and nothing at all next day.

And so it is very often with servants. Those who have been nearly starved at home, in service

are the most dainty and the most wasteful.

Now, as I have already said to you, God expects us to economise his gifts to us, whether these gifts be earthly or spiritual. We may waste and squander the spiritual gifts of God, just as we may waste and squander the material gifts of God. And very often it is precisely such as most need the grace of God, such as are most without spiritual blessings, who do not know what to do with them when they have them, but throw them away.

Those, on the other hand, who daily pray, and daily receive of God a supply of His grace, value every means that He has ordained, or that the Church has provided, for feeding their souls—he that gathereth much hath nothing over, and he that gathereth little hath no lack. Each takes according as he needs. He asks for grace to strengthen him for such a trial, to enable him to overcome such a difficulty, to resist such a temptation, to master such an infirmity, and he gets enough. He seeks it where it may be found, and he gets it as he needs. He prizes every opportunity offered him. But the negligent, the irreligious, you will find, do not care for God's grace, do not care for sacraments, do not care for Church privileges: they cast these aside, they have no appear

for them, they do not know what to do with them, they value them not, because they have not grown up in an orderly Christian habit of using God's means of grace.

Now what I want to impress on you, children, is this—to accquire early a frugal habit of using all things that God gives: not to waste any of His blessings, not to throw aside into the gutters any of His gifts What you eat, and what you wear, came to you from God. He has given your parents means to provide you with food and clothing. Some have to work hard to furnish you with them; well! waste neither: use, but squander not. Eat as much as you want, but be neither greedy nor wasteful. God gave the bread, and God expects it to be received with thankfulness. So with your clothes: God gave your parents money to provide you with them. Be careful of them: do not involve your parents in more expense than is necessary to keep you decently clothed.

Just consider how much work has gone to make up your little coat or gown. First the wool grew on the sheep's back, and the farmer had to tend his flock, and cultivate roots for the winter food of the sheep, at great expense: then the wool was shorn, and washed, and put through a machine to card it

and draw it into long fibres, and it was spun in another machine, and woven into cloth ; and then it was dyed, and after that was cut out, and made into clothes for you. Even as being the result of so much labour you ought to be careful of it, so many men have given their time and labour to it. But still more ought you to be careful of your clothes because God has given them to you.

And now I come to another point.

Do you remember, when Jesus Christ rose from the grave, and S. Peter and S. John hasted to the sepulchre, S. Peter went in, and saw, "The linen "clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about His "head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped "together in a place by itself."

Why do you think that this little incident is mentioned in the gospel ? What can be the reason that it is recorded, and that now, nearly two thousand years after the Resurrection, we should know what was done with the linen shroud and face cloth of Christ—that the shroud was rolled up and put in one place, and the napkin, carefully folded, and put away in another place ? I will tell you—to teach us Tidiness. I can think of no other reason. Just as in the great miracle of feeding the five thousand, the Lord bade His Apostles gather

up the fragments that remained, that nothing might be lost, that He might teach us the necessity of avoiding wastefulness, so at His Resurrection He laid His grave clothes in careful order, neatly folded, to teach us tidiness.

Just think of this! on that joyous morning of Easter, after the cruel death on Calvary, after the descent into the place of departed spirits, the hour came when the soul of Jesus returned to the body lying stiff and cold in the tomb. Once more the flush of life came into the cheeks, once more the dim eyes brightened, and the still heart began again to beat, and the lungs to breathe. Well! what was Christ's first thought? Did an angel come down from Heaven, and was there an earthquake? Did Christ go at once to relieve the anxiety, and cheer the heart of His mother? Did He at once escape the prison of His grave? No! He first folded up His grave clothes, and put them tidily in their proper places, and then—then—rose from the grave. You may be quite sure that unless tidiness were a Christian grace, Jesus Christ would not have provided that His Gospel should record this striking instance of it for all ages to read.

Slovenliness comes of idleness, or carelessness. It is one of the manifest tokens of indolence. The

boy or girl who is untidy is generally so because too lazy to put things away. Things are left about, and get lost or broken, because the owners will not take the trouble to put them away. This is another form of wastefulness. This shows that a sufficient value has not been set on things provided. Yet everything provided for the child has cost money, and cost trouble, and therefore should have care taken of it. A book, for instance, has cost money—say a shilling. It is thrown about, gets torn, and the back broken; it is of no more use. That is just the same as throwing away a shilling—but you know at once how wrong it would be to throw money away. Well, can you not see now how wrong it is to waste that which has cost money?

If you are disposed to untidiness, to leaving your things littering about to be spoiled or lost, think of the sepulchre of Christ and the rolled up grave clothes, and take example from them. Christ is not our pattern in great things only, but in little things as well. He that copies Him in small things, will copy Him in great: He that values material gifts, will value spiritual gifts also.

SERMON IV.

IDLENESS.

ROMANS XII. 11.

"Not slothful in business."

WHEN God made Adam and Eve, He put them in the Garden of Eden that He had planted. "And out of the ground made the Lord God to "grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and "good for food. And a river went out of Eden to "water the garden." Everything grew there in the greatest profusion, the grape, the fig, the almond, the nut, the apple; golden wheat, and bearded barley, and hardy rye There was no lack of anything; and yet we are told "The Lord God "took the man and put him into the garden of "Eden, to dress it and to keep it." Even in Eden Adam was not to be idle, even before he fell the obligation was laid on him to work.

But when he fell, then the earth fell also; it no longer brought forth so luxuriantly as before, and

man was forced to till it with the sweat of his brow. Work became hard labour.

I would have you take note of the fact that man when first created was set to work. When he fell he had to work harder, but it was not then that the obligation to work was imposed upon him. And on every child of Adam the same duty is laid—to work. No man, no woman, no child, without going against God's ordinance, can escape the obligation to work. God would have no idlers, no, not even in Eden. No! not in the noblest and stateliest mansions. To work is incumbent on all.

To work is a hardship to some, it is a duty and a blessing to all. Yes, it is a blessing. Every duty fulfilled brings a blessing with it. Every duty avoided brings a curse. The rich man is bound by God's law to work as much as the poor man. The rich man who idles his time away, is as discreditable a member of society as the vagabond beggar.

Christ came on earth to be our example. Did He idle? From His childhood till His death He was ever at work. He worked in the poor shop of Joseph at Nazareth, sawing, planeing ; He worked during the three years of His ministry without giving up. Even in the grave His soul did not rest, but went and preached to the spirits in prison.

Now there are various ways of working. Some work with their hands, others with their brains. One works in the fields, one in the library, one in parliament, one at the counter, one at the desk, one handles the gun, one the oar, one the trowel, one the spade, one the pick. There are different callings, as there are different administrations, but Idleness is no calling, and no man is sent into this world without a vocation.

The story is told of one of the Saints, who in early life was obliged to live, in the court of the King of the Franks, an idle life of lounging about amidst hawks and hounds, of feasting, and dancing, and jesting, that when he one day saw a poor labourer enter the court, he took and kissed his horny hands, because the blessing of heaven was on them, working hard for the daily bread, and so fulfilling the law of God. But the scientific man, working in the study, and the literary man with his pen, and the politician with his tongue, and the musician with his fingers on the keys, and the painter with his brush, aye! and the draper with his yard measure, and the seamstress with her needle, and servant with her broom, all are fulfilling God's will as much as the labourer at the plough.

Of old, in France, every man, the king not

excepted, was obliged to learn a trade. The law did not allow any man to be without a craft. It supposed every man to be a working member of society, an unit, not a cipher in the commonwealth. So every prince of the blood royal was put to a trade. That poor king, Louis XVI, who was guillotined by the Republicans, was apprenticed as a watch maker, and when he was a king he loved to go on mending or making clocks. You know what a good example our young English princes set in that respect; how Prince Albert Victor and Prince George are on board a ship, being trained to be sailors, and working as hard as any ordinary midshipman.

Now although I bid you remember that to work is the law of God from which no one is exempt, yet God does not expect us to be always at work, without rest and recreation. Indeed He has appointed one day in the week for this object, first indeed to be sanctified to the worship of Him, and then for relaxation. When the Apostles of our Blessed Lord had been very hard at work for some time, He said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a "desert place, and rest awhile; for there were "many coming and going, and they had no leisure "so much as to eat." But the object of rest is to

enable man to go back to his work with fresh zest, and renewed vigour. Doing nothing is a relaxation, not a profession.

My children! now in the time of youth you form the habits for life. If now you grow up in idleness, you will idle through life, and saunter out of it without having fulfilled the vocation set you when you entered into it. If you grow up diligent, methodical, loving work, then when you are men or women, you will prove yourselves useful members of society, you will hate idleness, and your busy hands or brains will be employed through life, turning the talents entrusted to you to good account.

It is whilst you are children that the direction is given to your lives. I have been on the high table-land where rises the river Danube, and also a great many other rivers that flow into the Rhine The land there is one great marsh, very flat, and a very slight elevation, the foot or a stone, will turn, a tiny rill, and make it alter its course, so that it runs into the Rhine instead of into the Danube, or the other way. At one place it is said that the snow flakes and rain drops that fall on one side of the roof of a house go to feed the Rhine, and those that fall on the other side of the rooftree run off into the Danube. The drops on one slope are carried away

far to the North and West, and are rolled into the German Ocean, and those on the other slope glide away and sweep down further and further, South and East, and are swallowed up at last in the Black Sea.

Your childish days fall on some such a tableland, and two tendencies are before you—quite opposite, your days may flow evenly and regularly through the well cultivated banks of usefulness and orderliness, or may pass through the desolate and marshy flats of idleness and prodigality to the Black Sea of oblivion.

It is now that the direction is given to the current of your life, it is now, whilst you are children, that you determine how your days shall flow, it is now that the future is in your hands, and you can fix what it shall be.

Do you know why it is that you are made to practice while so young at the piano? It is because after you are fourteen, your hands, if left untrained, will become too stiff to do the fingering of the keys. This is true to some extent with all your faculties. If you do not exercise them now, after a while the ability to use them will have gone from you. I knew a man who dearly, passionately loved music, and was indeed a musical genius. He had not learned

the piano as a boy. Well! he began it when he was past twenty, he toiled at it till he was seventy-five, when he died, and yet never was able to play an easy piece correctly. He had let slip the years when he might have learned, and could not recall them.

You ought indeed to value these years of youth. There are so many things you can acquire in them, which can only be learned later with great difficulty, if learned at all. This thought should stimulate you to activity. But there is a better thought than that to urge you on, to stir you to shake off idleness, it is that I have already set before you—the thought that God expects of every man that he shall work.

I have no doubt you think that a person who is rich does not need to work No. He need not work for his daily bread. But work at something he must, or he will fall from his vocation. If he has no need to work for himself, so much the more time has he in which to work for others.

A great German poet wrote a play called "Faust, in which he shows us a man with youth, and wealth, and talents, spending his time in amusement and pleasures, and finding misery therein. He has tried learning for its own sake, and finds disappointment therein. Then he tries to do good to his fellowmen,

to work for them, to drain marshes where men sicken with ague and fever, and cut roads for the advance of commerce, and build schools for the instruction of the ignorant, and then he finds that he is perfectly happy. He is happy because he is not idling, but working, and working for the benefit of his fellowmen.

I know a dear old lady. I have known her for many years. She has a nice income of her own; she need not, and does not work for her livelihood. But neither her brain nor her hand is ever idle. Both are constantly engaged working for others. In a little country parish she worked for the poor, made scrap books for the children, knitted, cut out, and made articles of clothing for the needy. She has relations; and it is wonderful how their families have been supplied with useful things, mittens, and shawls, and stockings, and hoods, worked by those indefatigable hands. The busy mind foresaw what was wanted everywhere, and the nimble fingers worked to supply the want. Nor was the Church forgotten. She grew flowers for the vases, she embroidered for the altar, she played the harmonium. The life of this old lady was one incessant round of good works, with the sunshine of God's blessing brightening and hallowing it.

I am sure, children, that if you in these precious years train yourselves to love work, when you are grown up you will continue to love it. And even if you have not to labour to earn your daily bread, you will not lapse into idleness, but will work for others. And what more blessed than that? That is what our Lord and Master Jesus Christ did. In the days of His ministry He laboured—not for Himself, but for others. You will be following that most admirable example ; you will be doing that which you were sent into the world to do, you will prove yourselves true Christians ; and when you depart, you will be missed by many who have learned to love you; but you will be received by the working hands of Christ, whilst He says, "Thou hast been "faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler "over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy "Lord."

SERMON V.

WILFULNESS.

S. JOHN v. 30.

"I seek not mine own will."

THE Irish peasants have a superstition about a spirit, which they call the Phooka. The story they tell of it is this. It takes the form of a young horse, and lies down on the grass near where children are playing. When the children see it, they go up to it, and look at the animal. It appears most gentle: they pat it, and it seems pleased with their caresses. Then one or two of the boldest get on its back, whereupon the Phooka rises, and trots once or twice gently up and down with its load, and the riders are delighted. Then, all at once, it bounds over the hedge, and dashes away with them, up hill and down dale. They have no bit and rein to hold it in, on it tears to a headland, and plunges with them over a precipice. Some hours after, the children are found there dashed to pieces.

I believe we have got a wicked, mischievous spirit like the Phooka in England, which lures children to mount it, and when it has got them on its back carries them off headlong to ruin. But the name we give that spirit in English is Self-will. A very deceptive, alluring spirit it is. It looks so gentle, so easily manageable. It is so small, so innocent, and so playful. There can be no harm mounting it. But if we get on its back without bridle in our hands, and bit in its mouth, at once it becomes the master. When you mount a horse without a bridle, then the horse goes where it likes, and carries you where it chooses. But if it has a bit in its mouth, and you know how to manage a bridle, then you make the horse go where you like, and carry you where you choose.

Very well, the will is like a horse, either you or your will must be master.

One of the first things a child has to learn is to ride his self-will with a bridle. His hold on it may not at first be very strong, nor his seat very firm. He gets run away with now and then, and thrown off once or twice, but in the long run, if he persists and tries hard, and is kept to it, he masters self-will, and can trot, or canter, or gallop it through life with great comfort to himself, and without

doing mischief to anyone else. When you grow up without discipline, and are allowed to have everything your own way, and do just what you like, and are given what you want, whether it be good or bad for you, then you are riding self-will without bridle, and, after having trotted easily round and round the field of childhood with you for awhile, away it will go, over the hedge into manhood, and carry you where it wills, and must certainly bring you to ruin of body and soul.

As children, you are often called upon to do that which you do not like, to give up your own way, to yield to the wishes of others, to submit where you would like to rule. At first, no doubt, this drives tears into the eyes: the horse Self-will does not like the bit in his mouth, it teases and hurts him, and he would get it out if he could; but after a while you find it easier to yield to the will of others, you do not murmur and talk, but cheerfully give way. The horse Self-will is getting accustomed to the bit, and you to use the rein. In time you will be an expert rider.

I dare say some of you know what it is to be on the back of Self-will without a bridle. You have let the bridle fall from your hands, and you are no more master of your steed. Now what happens

when, for a whole day, you go where Self-will chooses? You will not yield to your brothers and sisters, or playfellows: if they wish one thing, you wish the reverse, and so you quarrel, and then come angry words and fighting. Have you gone into a paddock after a pony, and tried to catch him? You go one way, and immediately he goes another way. You get close up to him, and then he turns his head and gallops off to the other end of the field. He will not come when you want him, and he will go where you do not want him. So it is with the unbridled will. It is perverse, and delights in going contrary to the will of others. You have your way, and cause your parents annoyance. They say what a wilful, fractious child this is: it will not do what it is told, and it is not happy doing its own will. That is true: you are not happy in having your own way in everything. You have not spent a happy day, and when you lay your head down on your pillow, you are discontented with every one, everything, even with your own self.

When you grow up to be man or woman, you cannot have your own way. Society will not allow you to do exactly what you like, any more than the law will allow any man to tear through the streets of London on a horse without bit and bridle. For

just as a man on a runaway horse will knock down, hurt, and perhaps kill people in the streets, so a man on runaway Self-will will become a general nuisance in society. If you attempt, when grown up, to ride Self-will without a bit, you will get plenty of blows, and suffer a greal deal, undergo hard speeches, reprimands, rebuffs, and if you persevere, Self-will will dash you to destruction.

Have you read, in old Roman History, of the horse Sejanus? That was a horse which apparently brought misfortune to every man who mounted him. First he belonged to the consul, Cnejus Sejanus, from whom he got his name. The consul had his head cut off six months after he had mounted the horse. Then the beast became the property of Dolabella, who gave a huge sum of money for him. Before the year was out, Dolabella was murdered by rebels in Epirus. His next owner was Caius Cassius, who, with his wife and children, was speedily put to a cruel death. Then Sejanus passed into the stable of Mark Anthony, who gave for it double the sum paid by Dolabella. Two months after, Mark Anthony died by his own hand. Then the horse became the property of a man named Nigris. This man rode him one day into the river Marethon, to swim him across: but the current was

so strong that Nigris was swept out of the saddle and drowned. After that Sejanus was thought to be such an unlucky horse that no one would buy him at any price.

Self-will is quite as unlucky a horse as Sejanus.

You can understand for yourselves that half-a-dozen persons cannot live together in the same house, each doing his own will, without regard to the wishes of the others. This household would break up directly. The father, the mother, the children, the servants, all seeking to follow their own devices irrespective of the well-being of the family—what could it end in but confusion? The world, you will find out as you grow older, and have to go out into it, is constituted much like a family; it is a household on a large scale. You will find that in it no one can follow his own devices without consideration of others. If he attempts to do so, he will get hard knocks, and be taught by bitter experience that he must give way to the wishes of his fellows. This is the lesson every man must learn: and the only question is, when shall he learn it—in childhood or in mature years? If learned in childhood, then he goes out into life with the advantages of having acquired this all-important lesson. If he has not learned it in childhood, then his schooling

takes place in manhood. It is unpleasant to have to learn this in childhood, but it is infinitely more painful to be taught it in manhood. In childhood the lesson is impressed upon you with a great deal of forbearance and patience, and much is forgiven you because of your youth. But in mature years you will not meet with forbearance : society will jostle and thrust you about impatiently—it will have no forbearance with you. How comes this audacious fellow to give himself these airs, it will say, he ought to have learned his place and his duties as a child, now he must suffer for his neglected education! And you are kicked away, or trampled under foot.

I have only shown you how necessary it is for you to learn to control the steed Self-will: how you must learn to do so in your own interest : how sorely you will be punished if you allow it to run away with you.

But there is another reason why you should try to keep Self-will under, and bring it into subjection. And that reason is because you are Christians, following Jesus, copying His most perfect example.

Did He show self-will? Far from it: He said He was come into the world, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. Instead of

going quietly and comfortably home from Jerusalem with His mother and Joseph as they returned to Nazareth, He remained in the temple, hearing the doctors and asking them questions. He did so, as He told Mary, because He was about His heavenly Father's business. When He went about preaching and performing miracles, it was not to do His own will, but to fulfil the will of God. "Lo, I am con-"tent to do it, Thy law is within my heart." When He suffered the agony in the garden, His human will desired escape from the terrible death on Calvary; but then He at once said, "Thy will, not "mine, be done."

You have Christ's pattern to imitate. Try, then, to be true Christians, by conquering your self-will, and becoming masters of it, so that you may be able to yield to the wishes of others: and if you have it in subjection, you need not fear, but you will be able so to direct it that it shall also be conformed to the will of God The will that resists the human wills of fellow men, will resist the Divine will of God; but the will that yields to the wills of other men, will fulfil on earth the will of God as it is fulfilled by the angels in Heaven.

SERMON VI.

OBEDIENCE.

2 COR. XII. 14.

"I seek not your's, but you."

THERE came once to Quintus Fabius, a great Roman general, ambassadors from a certain province, bringing a rich present of gold and silver, which they offered with great show of respect. But Fabius rejected it haughtily, saying, "Sirs, you do "not understand. I seek not your's, but you. I do "not ask you for wealth, but for yourselves." He meant that the Roman state was not prepared to allow the allegiance it exacted to be bought off with a rich present. It demanded the absolute submission of the province.

This was spoken with arrogance. But the story may be given as an illustration of what God in justice demands of us. Fabius exacted obedience, because he had subjugated the province with his

sword. God expects obedience because He has created us. The obedience of the province was to be given out of fear. Our obedience is to be given out of love.

A man may build churches, found schools, endow hospitals, but unless he be obedient to God, this is all nothing; God says, "I seek not your's, but you." He does not say, "My son, give me thy money;" but "My son, give me thy heart."

What S. Paul says of charity may be said also of obedience. Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not obedience, it profiteth me nothing.

Saul was ordered by God to destroy the Amalekites, with their cattle, "ox and sheep, camel and "ass." But after the battle Saul and the people "spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and "of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was "good, and would not utterly destroy them; but "everything that was vile and refuse, that they des- "troyed utterly." Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wherefore didst thou not obey the voice of the "Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil?' And Saul said unto Samuel, "Yea, I have obeyed the voice of "the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord "sent me, and have brought Agag, the king of

"Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amale-
"kites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep
"and oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord." Thereupon Samuel answered indignantly, "Hath the Lord as "great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as "in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to "obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than "the fat of rams."

Now let us clearly understand what is meant by obedience. By obedience is meant the submission of the whole heart and will to the law of God. When you were baptized, you were made a member of Christ's kingdom. You became His subject, and His laws became then binding on you. An Englishman might become naturalised in Germany; he would sign a document, and thenceforth he would be treated as a German. Every German is obliged to serve a certain time in the army, and whenever an order is issued by the Emperor to that effect, he must leave his profession or trade, and shoulder his rifle, and join the army. Well! an Englishman who became a naturalized German, would be subject to this law, and when the order was issued, would have to march with the rest, or he would forfeit his rights and his privileges as a subject of the Empire.

Now at your baptism you were naturalized into

the Christian kingdom, made subject to its laws, and a partaker of its privileges. Therefore, Christ, your King, expects you to obey the laws. And if you obey them, you are a good subject. If you shirk the call, when he summons you to arms, or disregard the laws which govern the kingdom, then, it is clear you are not a good subject, you forfeit your place in it, and run the risk of losing all the advantages that may be derived from being a member of the kingdom.

You will understand, now, why God seeks not your's, but you. Suppose when the German Empire was threatened with war, the Emperor were to call all the able-bodied men to arms, and thereupon some were to say, "We do not want to fight, but we "will pay something towards hospitals for the sick "and wounded; or we will subscribe handsomely "towards providing knapsacks for the soldiers." The Emperor would say, "I seek not your's, but "you. I am your Sovereign. I have issued my "orders; obey, and do not attempt evasion of a "plain duty"

This is just the position of affairs in Christ's kingdom. There are certain laws laid down. Christ calls you out—mobilizes you—as it is termed—to fight against the devil and all wickedness and

worldliness. It is of no use evading a plain call and a plain duty. If you are a subject you must obey. If you shirk, you cease to be a good subject.

Now what are the laws of the kingdom?

You are bound to believe certain truths, and to fulfil certain duties, and shun certain evils.

I need not enter into particulars. You have been taught them over and over again. What I want to impress on you now is the necessity of obedience if you remain subjects of the kingdom of Christ.

In the first place, then, you have promptly and cheerfully to obey God. Cheerfully, I say, because, as God loveth a cheerful giver, so He loves cheerful obedience. It is possible to obey in a sulky, angry spirit, but such obedience is not pleasing, it arises from fear, not from love; and the submission we owe to God is not that of those who have been conquered, but of those who have been redeemed. It is possible also to obey in a negligent, unpunctual manner; like a soldier who slouches up to his post half dressed, and behind his time, and not holding his rifle properly. Such obedience is also unsatisfactory. "Cursed be he," says the Prophet, "that "doeth the work of the Lord negligently." (Margin Jer. xlviii. 10.)

There is one sort of obedience God does not exact of us, and that is a blind obedience, which is another name for idiotic obedience. God gives us His laws, and He makes it perfectly intelligible to us why He does so, and that it is for our good, and the welfare of the world, that they are given.

In the German army when the recruits are drilled, and put through the various manœuvres they will have to execute in actual warfare, the officers take the greatest pains to explain to them the why and the wherefore of everything, of every movement, of every assault or retreat, flank march, &c. Thus, in actual warfare, the soldiers obey promptly, not with a blind, but with an intelligent obedience. Now we clergy are the officers—the lieutenants in Christ's army. And we do our best to explain to you the why and the wherefore of everything, of every order that our great Captain gives: and we do so, that your obedience may be intelligent, that you may obey not merely because you are ordered, but because you understand that there is good reason for the command, and because also, you have perfect confidence in your great Captain and General in command—Jesus Christ.

Mind! I do not say that you are to disobey if you

do not see the reason of a command. No, no! that will never do. You must repose confidence in your General. He sees the reason, and He is glad if you can do so, also; and He wishes you to exert your faculties to find out the reason. He does not bid you exert your intelligence to make you disobedient, but to make you obey with intelligence. What would come of it, think you, if a troop of soldiers in the midst of a battle, were to stop and refuse to execute a manœuvre unless they were told the reason of it, and proceed to argue about it with their commander, when they should be obeying and fighting? Common sense tells you that this would never do.

So in the Church, which is the mobilized kingdom of Christ, we must obey and fight, and the more we understand our duties, the better we shall obey, and the more readily we shall obey. The laws of God and of His Church are never unreasonable, but we may not always see their purpose. That is because we are short-sighted, or imperfectly instructed. The fault is in us, not in them.

I said the Church, for the Church is God's army and kingdom. The commands of the Church are the commands of God, God is not one authority and the Church another, but the Church is the body of

Christ, the army under Christ, and in it all the officers take authority from Him, and all orders are issued with His authority.

Now, one thing more, in conclusion.

Do you remember how the ark was made? It was built of Shittim wood, and was overlaid with gold. The Ark was taken in battle from the Israelites, and carried by the victorious Philistines to Ashdod, and was first put in the house of Dagon. God thereupon visited the inhabitants of Ashdod with a grievous plague. So they sent it to Gath, and the people of that city suffered likewise : so they passed the Ark to Ekron. Then the hand of the Lord was stretched out upon Ekron, and the men of the city were also smitten with a sore disease. The Philistines full of fear sent back the Ark to the Israelites. When it came to Bethshemesh, the men there opened it, and looked in ; thereupon the people died who had profaned the Ark.

When the Ark was taken from Kirjath-jearim, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the Ark. "And the "anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and "He smote him, because he put his hand to the "Ark : and there he died before God."

Why do you suppose that God showed all men

that the Ark was so sacred? Why did He surround it with such terrors? Was it because of the value of the substance of which it was made? Certainly not! It was not the wood and the gold of the Ark that made it so precious in the sight of God, but the fact that in it was treasured up His law.

Now, my children, remember that you are arks, with the law of God written, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tables of your hearts: and God will not hold you in less esteem, and watch over you less carefully and lovingly than He did of old over the ark of wood and gold. As long as the law is there, in your hearts, the Presence of God is there, shining over you, the mercy seat is on you. Cast the law out, and you are nothing—nothing but the materials of which you are built, so much flesh, and blood, and bone.

SERMON VII.

PERSEVERANCE.

2 THESS. III. 13.

"*Be not weary in well-doing.*"

THERE was, at the beginning of the 7th century a famous bishop of Seville, a great writer whose works have descended to us; his name was Isidore. When he was a boy at school, he was wearied and disgusted with the drudgery of learning. He could not master the principles of grammar, and the propositions of Euclid. He despaired of ever getting on at his lessons, and he ran away from school, probably with the intention of becoming a soldier. The sun grew hot, and he became exhausted; so he sat down to rest beside a little spring that gushed over a rock. As he reposed in the shade, he noticed that the continual dropping of the water had worn away a large stone beneath the jet. Then he thought that if the light rain of

the spring could scoop out the hard heart of the stone, then assuredly constant learning would at last overcome his natural inaptitude to acquire knowledge. He turned back, and re-appeared at school; seated himself once more at his desk, and went on at the weary round of duties. The result was that he became a great doctor of the Church, and that now, twelve hundred years after his death, his books are still studied.

Long after the days of S. Isidore, an apprentice ran away from his master in London. He got as far as Highgate, and there, as he sat on a milestone, he heard Bow bells chiming, and thought they called him back, bade him turn, and promised that he should become Lord Mayor of London. You all know the story of Richard Whittington.

You are often dispirited and down-hearted about your school-work. It seems so hard and so uninteresting, such tedious, unprofitable drudgery. You feel disposed to give it up; the difficulties are more than you can master.

In the British Museum are a great many carved alabaster slabs from Nineveh, and stamped bricks from Babylon. They are written over with lines of characters, made of little arrowheads turned in all conceivable directions; it looks as if arrowheads had

been showered over these bricks and stones, and that, except for their being in lines, their arrangement was haphazard. But it is not so. They are writing When the slabs and bricks were collected and brought to England, nobody knew what the characters meant, and no one knew in what language the writing was. What could be more impossible a task than to find out the meaning of these strange arrowhead lines? However, patient students set to work, compared, and classified, and at last they found out what collection of arrowheads appeared to be verbs, and what to be substantives. Then they tried them with various languages, and at last got the key. Now these writings can be read and interpreted. Is not this wonderful? It is the fruit of patient perseverance. It might have been thought absolutely impossible to read inscriptions in an unknown and dead language, written in unknown characters, but patience and resolution not to be discouraged can work wonders, can do things that appear impossible.

There are in your head reason and memory; and both these faculties have to be cultivated. This is why you have to work at mathematics, and to learn so much by heart. Your reason is educated by means of mathematics, so that you may grow up to

think, and think problems out. And you learn by heart a great deal, you learn what may perhaps be of no use to you; but still your memory is being trained This is a most valuable faculty, and it is one that is very inadequately cultivated among us. Among savage people the powers of the memory are very great indeed, for they are obliged to remember things, whereas we have note-books, and can dot things down in them, and save ourselves the trouble of storing them in our heads.

In India the sacred books of the Hindoos are taught to the Brahmans, and they have to learn them with the greatest nicety, to know every word and stop. It is marvellous how much and how accurately they can remember the minutest particulars.

No doubt you feel it very hard to work at your mathematics, and to learn much by heart. But be not discouraged; these are most necessary things for you to do for the education of your minds. Those who have not been taught to think clearly when young, are rather troublesome in maturity, they are so confused in their notions, they do not "go to the bottom of things" as the saying is. And such as have not had their memories trained to be exact, labour, in after life, under great disadvan-

tages. They remember about events, but do not grasp the particulars, which are exactly what are most needed. They remember that something happened, for instance, but not the day on which it happened.

But I will speak no more to you about perseverance in your school work, but of perseverance in other matters.

First, let me exhort you never to undertake anything, till you have well weighed it, and seen that you can finish it. Then, when you have taken it in hand, as a matter of principle, go through with it to the end. Some people are always beginning things and leaving them incomplete. They want the gift of perseverance. Or, they begin a thing well, tire of it, and finish it off roughly and carelessly. I will tell you what their undertakings are like. They are like the image that was seen by Nebuchadnezzar. The head of the image was of fine gold. So is the beginning of the undertaking of a person without much moral resolution and determination to persevere. There is the grandest start made. Everything is to be excellent, splendid and superfine. The breast and the arms were of silver. Interest begins to slacken; still the work is good, but not so good as before; it is as inferior

as silver is to gold. The belly and the thighs were of brass. Here is a still greater falling off. The legs of iron. Worse still. The feet part of iron, and finishing off with clay. Here indeed is a picture of imperfection, of good intention, and bad execution, of grandest beginning, and wretched termination. The head gold—the toes clay.

Now take care before you undertake anything, that it shall not resemble Nebuchadnezzar's image. Make a resolution to carry out to the end whatever you begin, in quality equal to the beginning. "Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with "all your might."

It is better to do a little well, than a great deal badly. It is better to begin a little matter and finish it, than to start a great one and leave it incomplete.

If this be good advice in ordinary matters, it is still better advice in your spiritual concerns. In your religious life as in your worldly life, never attempt more than you feel sure you can go on with It is much better to begin with the clay, and mount up through iron and brass to silver, and finish off with gold, than to begin with gold and come down to clay.

If you undertake any good work, finish it. But

do not undertake one till you have turned over in your mind your capabilities of carrying it out. Nothing is more common than for children to resolve to do this or that good thing, and to leave it undone, forget about it, or tire of it. Far better, I say, never to have made the resolution, than not to carry it through. I would not have you aim very high. Find out what you can hit, and try to strike the bull's-eye, but do not make shots at the moon.

Many a man has failed in his Christian course, because he has been too ambitious at first. When running for a race you are warned to run quietly at first, and to quicken speed at the end, and go to the goal with a rush. If you put out your full strength at starting, you soon get out of breath, lag, and probably come in last. The head is gold and the feet clay. I have known a good many precociously pious children, and they have grown languid in their religious profession when youth came on, and have ended in complete indifference and an ungodly life. The head gold, the feet clay. A river always has a small head, and widens as it goes on. A tree begins as a small plant, and increases its bulk and height as it grows. The day begins with a little streak of white, that widens

and brightens till the sun arises. So is it in the Christian life. The beginnings are small, the results are great. A river does not stop flowing, nor a tree arrest its growth, nor the day halt in its dawning; so the true Christian life is one of gradual progress. And it is one of progress, because the Christian soul is endowed with the grace of perseverance. Without perseverance it gives up increasing, it ceases from the struggle that attends its growth, and comes to naught.

The grace of perseverance is then a very precious one. It is the continuance of life in your soul. Without it the good begun in you at Baptism will never be perfected; the seed sown in your heart will bear no fruit, the work begun will never be completed. I have seen little chickens that have died in their shells, without hatching out. They did not peck vigorously enough, or resolutely enough, at the thin white wall that shut them from the sun and air. They gave it up as hopeless, the breaking through of the shell, in which they could see no rift, and so they died. There is many a good intention, children, that dies like an unhatched chick. All that is wanted to perfect it, is perseverance, a determination to go on in spite of obstacles, to work on in spite of restraint. Persevere in good, and

obstacles will give way, and obstruction crack and fall before you, and good resolves will end in living works.

Perseverance is a grace,—that is, it is a gift of God. As such you must pray for it, pray that you may persevere unto the end, for it is only to such that the crown of life is promised: pray that He who has begun the good work in you may finish it. It is only he that endures to the end that shall be saved; only he who fights the good fight of faith, and having done all he can, stands on his ground, not driven from it, who will be rewarded as a victor.

When Jesus Christ died on the Cross, He bowed His head, and said, "It is finished!" What was finished? Why, the purpose for which He had come into the world, the Redemption of mankind. He went through with it at the cost of bitter agony, shame, and death; at the cost of the scourge, the crown of thorns, the nails, the spear. "The work "which My Father hath given Me shall I not do "it?" Take that text as your maxim through life. You have a work set you by your heavenly Father, the work of spreading His glory and making your immortal souls to grow. Pray God to give you His best gift of perseverance, that you may, all through life, continue doing the work of

God, both without and within, till death comes: and then your perseverance in well-doing will be rewarded with Eternal Life.

My Lord in glory reigning,
Upon the glassy sea,
By angel-hosts surrounded
Is thinking still on me.
My heart for joy is dancing,
My lamp is burning clear,
The Bridegroom bids me enter,
If I but persevere.

My Lord a land is ruling,
The Land of Pure Delight,
Whence hate and night are banished,
And all is love and light.
What though my lot be lowly!
What though my way be drear!
'Tis mine, 'tis mine, that Kingdom,
If I but persevere.

My Lord a home is building,
A mansion passing fair,
Of orient pearl and burnished gold,
Of jewels, costly, rare.
A home where nothing wanteth,
Away with doubt and fear!
'Tis mine, 'tis mine, that mansion,
If I but persevere.

My Lord a crown is binding,
Of flowers in heaven that blow,
Of ruby red, and turquoise,
Of flames, and flakes of snow.
In sorest fight, hard driven,
This thought my heart will cheer,
'Tis mine, 'tis mine, that garland,
If I but persevere.

My Lord a song is teaching
The angel-choirs on high,
They strike their harps and cymbals,
And sound the psaltery;
A song to greet the wanderer,
To heaven's gate drawing near,
'Tis mine, 'tis mine, that welcome,
*If I but persevere.

* Copies of this Hymn for Children's Services, or for Home or School use, with the Music specially written for it, may be had from Messrs W. Skeffington and Son, 163, Piccadilly. Price One Penny each, or 7s. per 100. The words only, Fifty copies for 1s. 6d.

SERMON VIII.

IDLE TALK.

PSALM XXXIX. 1.

"I said, I will take heed to my ways; that I offend not in my tongue."

WHEN Jephthah went with the Gileadites to fight against the children of Ammon, he called the Ephraimites to help him. But they took no notice of his summons. Jephthah then went alone with his Gileadites against the enemy, and defeated them with a great slaughter. On his return home he found that the Ephraimites were ranged with warlike intentions against him, for they disputed his right to be judge over Israel, and they were envious of the glory gained by the Gileadites. Jephthah did not want to fight, but they were determined to do so, and threatened to burn him and his house with fire. So a battle was fought, and Jephthah put parties of Gileadites to watch the

fords of the river Jordan, over which the enemy would escape, and get back home. And when the fugitives came to the fords, and mingled with them were the pursuers, the Gileadites on guard were not quite sure which were which, for some of those flying pretended not to be Ephraimites. Now it happened that there was a difference in pronunciation of the letter S on one side of Jordan and the other. And the guard said to the fugitives, "say now Shibbo-"leth," and if they said "Sibboleth," then they knew at once that they were enemies, and slew them.

The tongue betrays the man. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil store of his heart produces evil things. "The wise "man by his words maketh himself beloved," but "the vile person will speak villany."

When the Jews could find no occasion against Christ in His acts, they sought "to entangle Him in "His talk." When S. Peter had denied his Lord, and endeavoured to escape from the judgment hall of the High Priest, the servants knew that he must have been one of Christ's disciples by his tongue. "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Gali-"lean, and thy speech agreeth thereto." "Surely

"thou also art one of them, for thy speech bewray-
"eth thee."

Holy Scripture has a great deal to say about sins of the tongue. We are often very careful not to *do* anything that is sinful, but we are far less careful about our words than our acts, we guard our tongues much less than our hands. And yet we may sin quite as grievously with one as with the other, a guard is needed on our speech quite as much as on our acts. We shall be judged for what we have said as well as for what we have done.

Consider how much evil can be wrought by the tongue.

Lies—sins against the truth. Slander — sins against the character of our neighbours. Unseemly speech — sins against decency. Boasting — sins against modesty. Swearing and cursing—sins of profanity. Excessive speech—a sin of wastefulness. Clamour—an exhibition of temper.

Let us consider these very shortly.

God is Truth. The Devil is said to be the Father of Lies, a liar from the beginning. And we are told that among those who will be excluded from Heaven is everyone who loveth and maketh a lie.

There are various ways of telling lies. And some lies are much worse than others. Lies which have

been premeditated; that is, lies that have been deliberately planned, are much worse than those told without forethought. And disingenuousness, prevarication or quibbling, evasion of the truth, are all forms of lying. Truthfulness is one of the noblest characteristics of a man, and it is one of the most precious graces of a Christian. "Putting away "lying," says S. Paul, "speak every man truth with "his neighbour, for we are members one of another."

Slander is the speaking evil of others. As with a blow we may hurt another man's body, so with a word we may wound his honour. As with the sword we may kill his body, so with the tongue we may kill his character.

The law everywhere recognises that a man's honour is his most precious possession, and so it punishes, where it can, those who steal his honour, just as it punishes those who steal his money. But it is much harder to catch the thief or murderer of a good name, than the thief who runs off with a cash box, or the assassin who kills a man. Now if it be right to act kindly and justly in our dealings with others, it is also right to speak kindly and justly of them. We are sinning very grievously if we steal from them their honour, wound their good name, just as we sin very grievously if we

take their money, or run a knife into their bodies.

Unseemly speech is also a sin of the tongue. S. Paul says, "let no corrupt communication proceed "out of your mouths, but that which is good to the "use of edifying." There are some things, he adds, which it is a shame even to speak of. "All un- "cleanness,—let it not be once named among you, "as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish "talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient." He does not mean that we are not to talk cheerfully and jest, but not to make coarse, nasty jokes.

Boasting, again, is a sin of the tongue. "Boast "not thyself of to-morrow," says Solomon, "for "thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own "mouth." There is no glory, he says elsewhere, in a man searching out his own glory. Of boasting I need not say very much, for it is one of the most offensive of the sins of the tongue, and, among children, is most speedily put down by themselves. A vain-glorious, "bragging" boy or girl is generally disliked, and is sure to be made to feel the disgust boasting inspires on all sides. Where boasting is there is no modesty, no humility. The modest mind seeks to hide from sight, the humble mind thinks little of itself.

Swearing and cursing again are sins of the tongue. To swear is to call God to witness that what is said is true. To curse is to call down God's wrath on some person or thing.

"Above all things, my brethren," says S. James, "swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the "earth, neither by any other oath: but let your "yea be yea, and your nay, nay." And the apostle in thus exhorting you, is only repeating the words of Christ—"I say unto you, swear not at all: "neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by "the earth, for it is His footstool: neither by Jeru- "salem for it is the city of the great king. But let "your communications be yea, yea, nay, nay, for "whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Cursing is more dreadful than swearing. It is the most horrible form of prayer—the prayer of devils —a cry, indeed, to God, but to God to bring misery and pain and damnation, not mercy and comfort and salvation.

Excessive speech I said was a sin of wastefulness. When I said so I daresay you thought I said something very strange. But I have already spoken to you about wastefulness, and how we should use all things in moderation. We must not waste our money, nor our time, nor our words. "There is one,"

says the author of Ecclesiasticus, "that keepeth "silence, and is found wise; and another by much "babbling becometh hateful. A wise man will hold "his tongue till he see opportunity, but a babbler "and a fool will regard no time." I knew a poor family, the man and his wife drank and idled. They had a cottage and garden. In winter they pulled up the pailings round their garden and burned them, then they broke up parts of the floor and burned them, then they chopped up the garden gate and burned it, then they tore down the doors of the rooms and burned them, then they pulled the chimney pieces out of the walls and burned them. They must keep the fire up, and so they laid their hands on anything, however necessary, and turned it into fuel. An idle tongue is like the fire of these people, it must be kept going. If there is proper fuel, well. If not, anything, however unsuitable, must be used. An excessive talker will talk of anything, what he knows, and what he does not know, good and bad, truth and lies, slander, unseeming speech, folly—it matters not, the tongue must clack. An immoderate speaker is certain to commit many sins of the tongue, because he or she cannot refrain from speaking, having lost all control over the tongue, as to *when* it should speak, all control as to *what* it

should speak of goes as well. "A man full of "words," says David, "shall not prosper upon the "earth," and the reason is clear; having no control over his tongue, it is always getting him into scrapes, and setting people against him.

Clamour is also a sin of the tongue, by which I mean all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and evil-speaking, which ought to be put away. A noisy, contentious, quarrelsome person is a person who is constantly sinning with his tongue. His heart is wrong, for he is at enmity with others, and as the heart is wrong, what proceeds out of it is bad. He does not speak the truth, he exaggerates, he slanders, he curses. He uses his tongue as a weapon of offence.

But clamour is also wrong when it is mere rude noisiness. I do not say it is then actually wicked, but it is unchristian. It was said of Christ, "He "shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man "hear His voice in the streets." If we would be like Christ, we must strive to be gentle and subdued, even in our mirth, and avoid riotousness and uproariousness.

When a doctor seeks to know your health he looks at your tongue. He knows by its condition what is the state of your bodily health. Your

tongues also give pretty sure token of the state of your spiritual health. If they are clean, your hearts are clean. If they are furred with falsehood, your hearts are false.

Try, my dear children, to keep a guard on your tongue, pray with David, "Set a watch, O Lord, "before my mouth : and keep the door of my lips." But at the same time endeavour to keep your hearts simple, true, loving, modest, and then from them will pour forth only what is honest, kindly, straightforward and pure, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

SERMON IX.

ALEXANDER AND RUFUS.

(GOOD FRIDAY.)

S. MARK xv. 21.

"And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear His Cross."

IN Antwerp Cathedral is a very beautiful series of pictures of the passion and death of Our Blessed Lord, pictures full of feeling and thought. One of them represents our Lord bearing His Cross on the way to Calvary, when Simon of Cyrene is met coming out of the country, with his two boys, Alexander and Rufus, and he is compelled for a while to bear the Cross, and ease the shoulder of Jesus, galled by its great weight. After a while the Cross is once more given to Christ to carry, and in the picture that follows we see the two boys looking with awe-struck eyes at the pale face of Jesus,

with the blood trickling down from the thorn-crowned temples. There is pity trembling in the eyes and on the lips of the lads, mingled with curiosity. The next picture represents Christ falling beneath His Cross, and a soldier has a rope raised with which to strike him. And there is little red-headed Rufus, unable to bear the sight, bursting into tears, and hiding his face on his brother's breast.

Simon, who bare the Cross for Christ, was of Cyrene, which is in northern Africa; he it is, in all probability, who occurs again in the Acts of the Apostles, as one of the teachers of the Church of Antioch, "Simeon that was called Niger," and associated with him was a countryman, "Lucius of "Cyrene." He was called Niger, no doubt on account of his dark complexion; perhaps he may have had black blood in his veins, or he may only have been darkened by the burning African sun. He who bore the Cross was a well-known man in the Early Church, for he is named by S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke. S. Mark adds that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, I believe for this reason:—S. Matthew only mentioned Simon, because Simon alone was known to the Church in Palestine as teacher at Antioch; and S. Matthew's Gospel was written for the Church in

the Holy Land. But the Gospel of S. Mark was written for Gentile believers, and old authorities tell us, at Rome, for the Roman Christians. Now the Church at Rome of course did not know Simon; but probably did know Alexander and Rufus, his sons. And I suppose this is why S. Mark inserted these words. It was as much as saying, "That "Simeon, who bore the Cross, was the father of "those two men now labouring for the Gospel "among you, whose zeal and patience ye so well "know." If we turn to S. Paul's epistle to the Romans, we find that among those he greets at Rome is Rufus, whom he speaks of as "chosen in "the Lord," and he sends his loving salutation both to him and to his mother, whom he affectionately terms "mine," that is, whom I look upon with as much tenderness as if she were my own mother.* It is probable that when S. Paul wrote this letter, some thirty-three years after Christ's death, old Simon the Cyrenian was dead, and Rufus was living with his mother at Rome. About sixteen years before S. Paul had been a teacher along with Simon the Black, and Lucius of Cyrene at Antioch, and it is possible that he may have lodged there with Simon, and so got attached to the mother

* Rufus is said by Dorothæus to have become Bishop of Hyrcania.

of Alexander and Rufus, having there felt her motherly kindness. Of Alexander we know nothing: he is not mentioned in the Epistles of S. Paul, nor in the Acts. Alexander, who with Hymenæus, deserted S. Paul, can not have been he, for this Alexander was a Jew of Ephesus, and is conjectured to have been the same as Alexander the coppersmith, who did much evil to the Apostle. Alexander was a very common name. There are many early martyrs of that name, some at Rome, and it is quite possible that he may have been one of them.

If those two boys, Alexander and Rufus, really were present when Christ passed through the street, on the way to Calvary, bearing His Cross, we may well believe that the scene produced a lively and indelible impression on their young hearts.

How many children there must have been on that Good Friday in the street, how many who saw Christ brought out by Pilate, and exposed to the derision of the people, with the purple robe cast over His shoulders, the reed in His hands, the thorns about His brow, and heard Him proclaimed as "The Man!" How many ran and crowded about the procession as it drew its sorrowful way to the place of execution! How many saw Jesus

fall beneath the Cross, saw Him comfort the weeping women, saw Him climb the slope of Calvary, and even watched the driving in of the nails, and the lifting up of the Cross.

And what effect was produced on them? We can partly tell. Some were hardened by the cruel sight, others were softened. They grew up to be men and women. And I doubt not, that among the early believers added to the Church, there were many who had received the first deep impression on that eventful day, when they were children. It was a day to leave a lasting recollection. There was first the tumult outside the judgment hall, and the roar of angry voices choosing Barabbas, and clamouring for Christ to be crucified. No doubt that must have shocked and surprised some of the children. They had known of Barabbas, that he was a murderer. They knew Christ who had drawn little children about Him, and forbidden His disciples when they sought to keep them off. Children always know those who love them, and cluster round them. So it must have been with Christ. They used to crowd about Him, and put their little hands into His whenever they could get near Him. They knew Him to be gentle and loving. And now they saw an act of flagrant

injustice committed before their eyes. The murderer was let out of prison, and allowed to go his way; and the Just One was led forth to death. Children never forget an injustice You may depend upon it, many a little one remembered the choice of Barabbas, and it was the starting point of his conversion to the faith of Christ. Then there was the procession through the streets, first the herald with a trumpet, proclaiming the accusation and sentence. Then Christ with the Cross, among the brutal soldiers, heedless of His weakness and sufferings. Then the weeping women, and around, and behind, a mixed rabble of jeering Jews.

Also, when Christ had been crucified there came on the great darkness in the middle of the day, and after that the earthquake, the rocks rent, and the graves opened, and the temple veil was rent.

Do you not think that the children would associate these events with what had gone before? I do.

Perhaps, after they had seen Christ go through the streets to His death, they were called away by their parents, or by their master to school. I do not suppose that those who had good homes were allowed to run out to Calvary and see the horrible execution going on there. Their fathers and mothers would not allow it. Only disorderly boys, and

truants from school, and those who had no parents to control them would follow up the hill, out of the city gate, and wait to see the end. They, no doubt, would join their shrill voices with the mocking words of the Jewish men, and their insulting gestures with the revilings and wagging of heads of the baser set who passed under the Cross. All the children who had thoughtful, decent parents, were called off; the girls to attend to needlework or tidying the house,—for it was morning—and the boys were sent to school.

Then whilst the girls were dusting or sewing, and the boys writing, gradually a shadow crept over the sun, and it fell dark,—darker than night, for the stars appeared not. It was deep pitch-black night in the middle of the day. The girls and boys ceased from their work, and sat frightened and silent. The darkness lasted three hours, from the sixth to the ninth hour,—that is from mid-day to three o'clock in the afternoon. Just when the boys were about to put down their pens and close their books, and sally forth from school, the blackness came on and arrested them. They did not dare to stir. It was like the darkness that fell on Egypt. "No power "of the fire might give them light; neither could "the bright flames of the stars endure to lighten "that horrible night. . . . . So then whosoever there

"fell down was straitly kept, shut up in a prison "without iron bars. For whether he were husband- "man, or shepherd, or a labourer in the field, he "was overtaken, and endured that necessity, which "could not be avoided: for they were all bound with "one chain of darkness." (Wisdom, xvii, 5-17.)

Then,—in that awful darkness, the earth shivered, and the rocks broke asunder, and there was heard on all sides the crash of falling stones. You have never, perhaps, heard the sound of an earthquake, or felt one. There is nothing so startling. First a strange rolling, rumbling sound, like the passage of heavy waggons, beneath in the heart of the earth, then the ground rocks under the feet, and immediately after comes the crash of walls and chimneys and roofs, shaken down by the shock. Now imagine this in the pitch blackness of that night in the midst of day!

Verily that Good Friday was a day to be remembered through life.

Well, my children, what effect does Good Friday produce on you? You do not indeed see the sights that met the eyes of those children, but, nevertheless, the events of that Day are brought vividly home to you every year. The death of Christ is shown to you, you hear about it, and have the events impressed

on you. Do they at all touch your hearts, and lead you to become devout followers of Christ, as I suppose was the case with Alexander and Rufus, and many other children present in the street on that first Good Friday, or do they only make you indifferent or hard? Passiontide must produce one or other result. Good Friday every year must leave you better or worse:—better, if your hearts have been made by it more tender to Christ, more loving, more resolved, more earnest;—worse, if the story of the Cross leaves you indifferent, careless, thoughtless, without pity for the pangs of Jesus, without regard for anything but your own amusements.

SERMON X.

THE RESURRECTION.

(EASTER.)

PSALM LVII. 9.

"Awake up, my glory; awake, lute and harp; I myself will awake right early."

IMAGINE, my children, the grave of Christ very early this morning before dawn. All is hushed in that cold vault, the stone at the door is sealed as well as closed. Without are the sleeping soldiers, and one pacing to and fro, keeping guard. The Easter moon, through the leafless branches of the trees in the garden, makes a lace-work of silver and black on the great slab. The stars are scarcely showing overhead, for the moonbeams pale them. The night wind moans through the dreary garden, and makes the lace of shadow on the tombstone sway and change. The town is hushed. Perhaps the twinkling lights in the temple, kept there burning night and day, may be seen in the dis-

tance, on the top of the hill, above the roofs of the houses.

And within, all night, angels have been kneeling, one at the head, the other at the foot of the dead body of Christ. I have no doubt that the pious women, when they made ready the body for the sepulchre, according to antient custom put a burning lamp into the tomb as well. And now the oil is spent, and the flame is dull and dying; in its start it stains with a dull yellow glare the napkin and the pall. The pale hands are folded over the pulseless breast; the chill brow is dabbled o'er with blood, and torn by the ragged braid of thorn. The feet—those blessed feet that walked through brambles and briars seeking the lost sheep—are motionless. The air in the tomb is fragrant with the spices left by the holy women on Good Friday evening. The angels bend without a sound in adoration of the body put on by the Son of God; in contemplation of the wounds it bore, and which redeemed mankind, in love of the face, so marred by buffeting, but peaceful and sweet in death, as it had been in life.

Hark! high aloft in the thin frosty air is a lark singing. It knows that morning is coming, and it springs from the turf to greet it.

Look! behind the ragged black rocks to the east, the night is not quite so black, a cold light begins to show.

And look within! a flush appears tremulously on the Redeemer's cheek, the lips faintly move; the breast rises, and the fingers stir the bulrush placed in the hand. Look! the eyes open; life has come back; the soul has returned.

Hark! what is that shout like thunder?

The Lord is risen! The grave is empty. O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?

"Awake up, my glory!" Truly may Christ say this after His long sleep, after the weary fight, after the sore Passion. Now the body sown in dishonour is raised in glory. Beautiful, resplendent, majestic is the risen Saviour. The battle is done, and He is the conqueror. He who was so weary on Friday, bearing His Cross, is now strong to break the gates of hell. Sown in weakness He is raised in power.

It was in tears and dying pain that Rachel clasped her new-born son, and with her failing breath and darkening eyes, called him Benoni, the son of sorrow. But his father called him Benjamin, the son of his right hand. On Friday, Mary saw her Son taken from her, and the sword, as foretold, pierced her soul. He was to her then, indeed,

Benoni, the Son of sorrow. But lo! to-day He is called by His Father Benjamin; He is exalted from the grave, raised in incorruption, the Son of the Right Hand of God.

"Awake, lute and harp!" Truly may Christ call on the angel choirs to greet His Resurrection. And doubtless they were present to attend His triumph, cherubim, flaming with love, seraphim, glowing with zeal, Michael, shouting, "Who is like God!" as of old when he smote the dragon. Gabriel, who had announced His Incarnation, with a "Hail" for the risen Lord. Raphael, who guided Tobit, comes to conduct the Son of Man.

"I myself will awake right early!" I myself, and not another; I, the same who died on Friday, marked with the same red wounds, still with my side pierced as by the spear; I, who was forsaken by my disciples, derided by the Jews; I, and not another, awake from the sleep of death right early; I, in spite of the stone rolled to the door of the sepulchre, and of the malice of the chief priests, and all their precautions. Notwithstanding the sentinels and the seals, I myself awake and arise right early.

Truly may it be said of Easter, "This is the day "which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and

"be glad in it." All days are made of God, but this is especially the Lord's Day. We rejoice, indeed, every week in a day that the Lord hath made, but each Sunday derives its sanctity and its glory only from the great Easter Day, of which it is the weekly reflection and reminiscence.

Christmas Day is a day which the Lord hath made, in which we rejoice and are glad. But yet in it we hear the weeping of the Child in the cold stable, denied entertainment in the inn.

The Circumcision is a day which the Lord hath made, in which we rejoice and are glad; but on it falls first the blood of the Redeemer.

The Epiphany is a day which the Lord hath made, in which we rejoice and are glad; but among the gifts of the wise men is myrrh, prefiguring the passion, and we know that it is followed by the slaughter of the Innocents, and the flight into Egypt.

The Transfiguration is a day which the Lord hath made, in which we rejoice and are glad; but Moses and Elias are present, speaking with the glorified Christ of His coming Passion.

But there is no cloud in the brightness of the joy to-day. There is now no sorrow in store, no shadow cast on the way Henceforth begins the life of glory, the life of humiliation is passed.

A day this, indeed, of joy and gladness to the angels, for this day they see their suffering King exalted in His Majesty; they see the peace and goodwill they promised at His nativity, assured by His resurrection; they see the first-fruits of restored mankind, the beginning of the new creation; the opening of the kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

A day of joy and gladness to men. For to-day they see the second Head of the race of man overcome death. Adam died; the second Adam also died, and He has risen again. They know now that though they may be laid in their graves, they also will arise from the dust, and if they have clung to their Saviour, will arise also in power, and glorious and incorrupt.

A day of joy and gladness to the Apostles, for to-day their fading faith is quickened. To-day they see that He in whom they have trusted, has not been trusted in vain. To-day they see Him who was rejected of the builders laid as the chief corner-stone of the Catholic Church.

A day of joy and gladness to Mary. For she sees her son whom she had wept as lost, restored to life again. She had pondered on all the marvels that had attended His nativity, and kept them

treasured in her heart. But her faith was sorely tried on Friday; now on Sunday it is strong again. At the general Resurrection Christ will wipe away all tears from the eyes of those who have sorrowed. Now at His Resurrection He begins by drying the tears of His mother.

A day of joy and gladness for you, dear children, for it gives you a hope and confidence to last you all your life. You will have many sorrows. You will be called to lose your dear parents, your loved father, your tender mother, may be, some of your brothers and sisters. But you will have the edge taken off these partings, the grief will be blunted by the thought that Christ has overcome death, and those you consign to the grave here will sleep in Jesus, and wake up again, like Him, at His call, to be with Him in His kingdom. A day of joy and gladness for you, for it will enable you to bear many a pain and hardship here.

It was for the joy set before Him that Christ endured the Cross and despised the shame in the judgment halls of Pilate and Herod, and on Calvary.

It was for the joy set before them that the martyrs counted their lives as nought, and gladly offered themselves to the tormentors. It was for the Resurrection joy set before them, that S. Peter

bore to be crucified head downward, S. Bartholomew to be flayed alive, S. James to be beaten to death with a fuller's club, that S. John entered the boiling oil, S. Paul bent his neck to the headsman's sword, S. Lawrence smiled when stretched on a gridiron over burning coals, S. Ignatius gave himself to be torn by the lion, S. Perpetua and S. Felicitas thought themselves happy to be gored in nets by wild cows.

In all your sorrows and tribulations here, children, you can look ahead, and hope, and derive strength and comfort from this,—that to all of you an Easter Day will dawn, for all of you the angel will shout the glad tidings that the graves are to give up their dead.

Job was bereft of everything. He had lost his riches. He had lost his children. He had lost his health. His wife was turned against him. His friends gave him no comfort. All that the earth could afford him had slipped out of his grasp. He was desolate and afflicted, and would have despaired but for one thing, one precious hope. "Oh that my "words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an "iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" What words? What words that consoled him, and might

prove the consolation of other forlorn hearts. "I "know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall "stand at the latter day upon the earth. And "though after my skin worms destroy this body, "yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see "for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not "another; though my reins be consumed within "me."

SERMON XI.

THE BAITS OF SATAN.

HABAK. I. 14, 15.

"Thou makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them. They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad."

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, as you well know, commissioned His Apostles to become fishers of men. And after his Apostles, His Apostolic ministry has the same business, the fishing for men. Every priest is not only, like his Master, a shepherd, but also like S. Peter, a fisherman. He has to patiently try and try again to catch human souls, and bring them to Christ. That is why all sorts of means are tried by the Church to gain souls. She is fishing for them, and she employs all kind of baits and fishing apparatus for catching them. The missionaries angle for some

souls, and get them one by one; others are drawn in, in great numbers, as by a drag-net.

All sorts of baits are used to catch human souls. Just as the good Samaritan, when he left the inn, gave two pence to the host, and told him to spend as much more as was necessary for the sick man, so Christ allows His ministers to use all sorts of means in addition to those He has Himself named and appointed, for bringing souls to Him.

One of the old fathers of the Church says that Satan is the Ape of God. That is, Satan imitates whatever God does, but with a different object. So God sends His ministers as fishers of men, and Satan also sends his ministers to fish for men. God seeks the salvation and happiness of men; but Satan seeks their ruin and misery.

God uses the beautiful things he has made, the flowers, the stars, the sea-shells, the little moss, the shady trees, as baits, to draw you to Him, to make you see how good and loving He is. And Satan takes the beautiful things in the world and uses them as his baits, to draw you away from God and from His service, to lure you into his power.

God loves to see you happy and merry. He is glad that you should have pleasure, for He is a loving Father, full of tenderness for His creatures.

Look how happy the butterflies, and the birds, and the beetles are, look at the cat, basking in the sun and purring, and the dog bounding about, barking joyously. God made them to be happy, and He has made you to be happy. The life that stirs in its veins, the glory of the sun, the abundance spread around it, make the animal happy. And all these God has given it for that very purpose. So He has given you all that may make you happy. But Satan takes the pleasures of life, and uses them as a bait to entrap you and bring you to misery.

Since man has been in the world, he has had to work. And God has blessed work. He has sanctified it, and made a sacrament of it, that if work be begun, continued, and ended in Him, it should convey grace and happiness. But Satan takes work, and tries to make mischief with that as he does with pleasure. He uses hard work, or the business of this world, as a bait; and lures man by means of it to forget God; and so it becomes no more sacramental, it no more conveys grace and happiness to the soul. Work is like a telegraph wire; as long as the wire is united with the source whence electricity flows, so long the current runs through it, and it conveys messages. But if the wire be broken, it becomes a mere dead bit of wire,

and no current passes through it, no words are conveyed along it. As long as work is begun in God, (and you can always attach any work to God by praying for His blessing on it,) so long grace streams through it, and the word of peace and blessing is passed along it to your hearts. But Satan tries to break the communication, tries to make you care for your work only, apart from God, and thus it is turned into dead, graceless, unprofitable work.

The world,—I mean by that the society of your fellows, may be very good, and may draw the souls of those who move in it to God, for there is a great deal of good in the world, kind people doing kind acts, thinking kind thoughts, speaking kind words, keeping their innocence unstained; holy souls, moving in the fires of temptation, like the three children in the furnace, without being burned, without even the smell of the fire passing upon them. And there are a great many amusements in the world, pleasure parties, and dances, and concerts, and theatres, and operas, which are harmless, and may be even good; and there are poetry, and painting, and music—the arts, all good; and there is learning—the study of flowers, the study of the stars, the study of languages, the study of antiquity, and so on, all very good, and harmless if used or

taken up with God in the thoughts. But all these may become very bad, if dissociated from God, if taken as baits of Satan.

You cannot always say that this or that is bad in itself. It is bad only when Satan has put his hook through it. Printing is good and bad, according as it is used. The Bible is printed, good stories are printed, scientific works are printed, all school books are printed, the printing in all these cases has been for a good purpose—to teach, to draw to God. But bad books, profane books may be printed, and they are the devil's baits. He has struck his hook into printing.

Consequently you must not rashly denounce an amusement or a pursuit, as bad, unless you can see the hook in it.

Now let us look at some scriptural instances of Satan's fishing.

Job was robbed of land, of cattle, of his children, of his health; But Satan left him his wife. What a comfort! God instituted marriage in Eden, He blessed the estate, and it is an holy one. How kind of Satan not to rob Job of every consolation! But stop a bit; Why is the wife left? Listen to what she says. She goes to Job, and she says, "How wretched is your lot; God has forsaken you.

"There is nothing left for you to live for, curse "God and die! Curse God for having allowed you "to fall into such wretchedness, and then kill your- "self. Put yourself out of your misery." Now you see why Satan left Job his wife. She was the bait. The temptation was in her, to lead him to blasphemy and suicide.

David was exalted by God from being a shepherd boy to be king over Israel. He gave him an obedient nation, servants, a palace, wealth, and a large army. Satan then began to angle for him; and the bait he used was the wife of Uriah. David saw that she was a beautiful woman, and so he sent Uriah to the wars, and told his generals to put Uriah in the forefront of the battle, where he might be killed, and then David took Bathsheba to himself. The king got the wife he wanted, and he was happy for a while. But presently Nathan the prophet came to him, and told him of his sin, and announced the punishment God sent him,—that his child should die. The 51st Psalm, "Have mercy upon me, O "God, after Thy great goodness, according to the "multitude of Thy mercies, do away mine offences!" is the wail of the penitent king, as the iron of the hook of Satan entered into his soul.

Judas was an Apostle. He had been sent by

Christ with one of the others, when they went forth two and two, preaching and working miracles. The devils had been subject to him. Here was a goodly fish for Satan! One of the chosen followers of Christ! How will he be caught? Satan puts his hook through the money bag. Judas was covetous. He bare the common purse, and he loved money. He took some of it for himself That was not enough. He wanted money. What for? What did he want to do with it? We do not know for certain, but the prophet Amos speaks of the Poor Man, that is Christ, being betrayed for a pair of shoes. (Amos ii. 6, viii. 6.) Perhaps that was what Judas wanted. His old shoes were worn out. I do not say for certain that this is why he sold his Master, but this, at all events, is certain that he did sell Him. Satan caught him first through the purse, and then landed him with the thirty pieces of silver.

Now, my children, as you go through life you will meet with all sorts of temptations. Temptations are Satan's baits. Very often the hook is hidden in the most harmless things; very often, not in those things — amusements, pleasures, pursuits, which you have been warned against as dangerous.

There are the Devil's hooks everywhere, on all

sides of you. You cannot swim through life without swimming past hundreds of them. But for all that, you need not be uneasy. I will tell you why. Satan is not a clever fisherman. He pulls the line before the fish is caught. You can tell very quickly whether a hook is in any pursuit, or pleasure, by seeing whether it is drawing you away from God. If so, at once let go. If you do not, you will get the hook into you, and then it can only be torn away with great pain, if you will escape Satan.

Whatever you undertake, keep God before your eyes. Just as you say now, I can't do this, or I must not go beyond a certain boundary, because my father would not like it, and so you keep your father before your thoughts, so in life keep God in your thoughts; and directly you begin to lose sight of God and to forget him—then beware! recover yourself as quickly as you can, you have somehow got hold of a bait which Satan is pulling towards him. Let go before it is too late! Not another bite, lest the iron enter into your soul!

SERMON XII.

THE END IN VIEW.

ECCLUS. VII 36.

"Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss."

THE time of youth is the time of learning. Whether you like it or not, you are obliged to study, for your parents know that your future condition in life, as men and women, will depend to a considerable extent on what you have acquired as children. Your thoughts are much directed to your studies. You take a certain amount of interest in them, have an ambition, maybe, to advance in them. Now as youth is so much engaged in study, it is well that you should have a clear understanding of your object in life for which you are preparing, that you should see the end at which you are driving.

Knowledge, which you are labouring to acquire,

is a great thing to acquire, but you must not over estimate it It is not everything David prayed, "O learn me true understanding and knowledge." Knowledge he desired to have, but he put it in the second place, a true understanding, or as the Bible version has it, "good judgment," comes in the first place. A right judgment is the most important quality to possess, and then it will know how to utilise and to what purpose to turn the acquisitions made by study.

I dare say that you have got boxes of puzzles at home; these are accompanied by a picture, or plan, and following this you are able to arrange all the little pieces. Well, by study you acquire a great number of little pieces of information, of all colours and sorts. If you lose the plan or picture, you do not know what to do with the separate pieces of the puzzle. So, if you have not got a right judgment, you do not know how to turn your knowledge to account.

It is no doubt an excellent thing to desire knowledge. But then I am not so sure that the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake is an advantage.

The serpent tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden tree, the fruit of which gave knowledge—the knowledge of good and evil. Eve was impelled by

curiosity to get this knowledge, she ate, and her eyes were opened. The acquisition of knowledge was her fall. That was because she sought it for its own sake. She sought it without a right judgment.

When Solomon came to the throne, God spoke to him in a dream, and said, "Ask what I shall "give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed "unto Thy servant David my father great mercy, "according as he walked before Thee in truth, and "in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with "Thee; and Thou hast kept for him this great "kindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit "on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord "my God, Thou hast made Thy servant king instead "of David my father: and I am but a little child: "I know not how to go out or come in. And Thy "servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou "hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be num-"bered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore "Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy "people, that I may discern between good and bad: "for who is able to judge this Thy so great a "people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that "Solomon had asked this thing." And God gave him what he asked—a wise and understanding

heart, and also, what he had not asked, riches and honour.

Observe, Solomon desired just the same thing as did Eve, "to discern between good and bad;" but he did not desire this knowledge for its own sake, but that he might make a good use of it. Eve got the knowledge without a right judgment guiding her, and it was a curse to her. Solomon got it, governed by a right judgment, and it was a blessing to him.

Now, what do I mean by a Right Judgment?

I mean a knowledge of the purpose to which all that is acquired by study may be put.

Now there are two purposes to which knowledge may be put,—the advance and advantage of self, and the glory of God.

When S. Paul speaks of knowledge puffing up, and contrasts it with charity that edifieth, he is referring to this.

Knowledge acquired for a selfish purpose fills a man with conceit, inflates him with pride, and makes him, generally, disagreeable. But knowledge acquired for a good purpose, to advance the glory of God, edifieth—it builds up and helps others.

What then is the purpose for which you learn? Is it merely because you are forced to do so? You

hate your studies, but you will be punished if you do not work at them. Then this is getting knowledge with a very poor, miserable purpose. The only purpose is, to escape being kept in or beaten.

But if you work at your lessons because you are thereby cultivating the talents and opportunities given you by God, then you are acting from a right motive. You have got a good and just judgment.

Now some of you will, I have little doubt, take an interest in your work. All studies are tedious at first, but after the first drudgery is over, they begin to afford pleasure, and to allure you on. Then the temptation arises to work at them for their own sake, to study history, or music, or drawing, or French and German, because it gives you pleasure. History interests and excites you. Music pleases your ear, drawing delights your eye, foreign languages enable you to read foreign story-books. When you have got so far in your lessons, you are very liable to forget the end, to delight in them for their own sakes, to use them selfishly, to begin to be puffed up with them, instead of keeping a right judgment to direct you, and a good purpose before you, the desire to edify with them.

I will take a very simple example.

You know what drudgery it is, practising on the

piano. You have to go on for many hours at your scales, and at elementary pieces, which are intolerably tedious, and cost you many tears. After a few years you are able to play better, and then take great delight in music, the world of art opens to you, and you begin to appreciate the glorious creations of Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, &c.

Well. It would lighten the labours when practising at the scales if you thought—I have much hard work to go through, but when my father and mother are old and weary, what happiness I shall be able to afford them! What pleasant evenings I shall make for my father when he is tired with his day's work. This would be a right judgment giving a direction to your studies. And, afterwards, when you found a pleasure yourself in your music, still you should think, My powers are not for myself alone, but for others. I must try to give others pleasure with my acquired art, as well as myself. Do you know what Haydn did, when he was composing "The Creation?" He wrote at the head of every leaf, "To the sole glory of God." He did not think of the applause he should gain by his great work. He thought only how it would express his thanks to God for the beauties of creation, and raise the hearts of the thousands who should hear

it to the Giver of all good. When it was first performed, the marvellous burst of music at "Let there "be light, and light was," caused such enthusiasm, that the whole house rose and shouted applause to the composer. But he, with the tears running down his cheeks, waved it away, exclaiming, "It came "from God, it is not mine, give glory to God!"

Now, boys, you will go out into life, and enter on your several professions. One will be perhaps a surgeon, another a merchant, another a farmer, and so on. Each, in your several professions and trades, will use the learning you have acquired at school in your youth. But how will you use it? For your own selfish purposes, or for the glory of God, and the good of your fellow men? That is, will you use it with a right judgment or without? I have seen, near Redcar in Yorkshire, a sort of college for old men and women, and also a school for orphans, all in one, with its chapel, and dining halls, and schoolrooms, and gardens, and library. This was founded and endowed by a tradesman named Turner, about two hundred years ago. In the library are preserved his account books, with lists of what he bought and sold every day. Well! at the top of every page is written, "To the glory "of God." That was his thought, not to make him-

self a great fortune, but to do good with his money, to bless his fellow men, to glorify God.

"Whether we eat or drink," says S. Paul, "let "us do all to the glory of God." Keep God before your eyes. As you pray that His kingdom may come, so labour to advance it. Have a right judgment guiding you, and God will prosper you, "Seek "ye first the kingdom of God and His righteous- "ness," says our Lord, "and all these things shall "be added unto you,"

You may depend upon it, that if you keep God before you in all you undertake—in all your studies, in all your work, in your business or profession, and seek first the advancement of His kingdom, and secondly your own profit, that He will not leave you without His blessing. But be sure—also, that if you seek your own advancement, enrichment, pleasure, and forget Him, and go on in selfish thoughtlessness of the needs and sufferings of others, and in godless forgetfulness of what is due to Him through whom all increase comes, then sooner or later you will cry out in despair, "I have toiled all "the night and have taken nothing."

SERMON XIII.

SELF-RESPECT.

GEN. I. 27.

"God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him."

EVERY virtue, if carried too far, becomes a fault. A great writer of antiquity said that virtue consisted in moderation, and he spoke the truth. Liberality in excess becomes extravagance, economy when too pinching is miserliness. Justice untempered is harsh, and excessive mercy lapses into injustice. Too great humility is as objectionable as too great self-esteem. A person may be so timid of himself, so weak-spirited, as never to be capable of undertaking any good, and may spend his life in a cringing moral cowardice, which is truly despicable. The reverse of this is self-esteem This in excess is pride, and pride is a mortal sin. But self-respect is a duty. Self-respect and pride have much in common, but they differ often as to the object which

inspires them. Pride is self-respect as long as it refers to those things a man has, and is moderate in amount. But very often a man is proud of that which he has not got. You will generally find a man most conceited about what he is most deficient in.

There are several reasons, children, why we should cultivate self-respect.

In the first place, we are made after the image of God: God has given us, what He had denied to the beasts, a free will and a divine soul. We are partakers of God's nature. He breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life, and man became a living soul. He stood on his feet, and something in himself told him that there was a God above him who had made him. The power in you to believe in God is the soul. The religious instinct which makes you turn to God, pray to God, trust in God, is the breath of God within you, the little spark of the Divine Nature lodged in your breasts.

The beast and bird do not think of God, because they have no souls. They go through their allotted course, do what their instincts tell them to do, without a thought of their Creator, any more than a clock, or a railway engine, or a steamboat has of its maker. But with you it is quite different. The little child looks up to God, and can love and trust

Him. It believes in Him without an effort. And this is because of the soul within, which comes from God, and turns to God.

You were made in the image of God. Now what does that mean?

First it means that you have spirit. God is a spirit. The animal when it dies ceases to be. But your spirit can live without a body. And at the Resurrection your bodies will be raised spiritual, that is, they will be able to do that which only spirits can do now, and go where only spirits can go now.

Then, again, God is eternal. And you are born to eternity. There never will be a time when you will not be. Thousands of years will pass, but you will still exist.

Then again, God is a Creator. He makes things out of nothing. He calls into existence things that were not. We to some extent partake in His creative power; we have a gift in us called the imagination, by means of which we can call up out of nothing forms that are not, and by various means give them a sort of actual existence. For instance, a painter, or a sculptor, forms an idea in his head, and he carries it out in a picture or a statue. A musician creates a beautiful melody, and

gives it existence by singing it, and playing it on the piano. Another invents a story, and calls up all sorts of persons and scenes, and creates all sorts of incidents and situations, and in a book gives them a sort of real existence. Now of course these are all very inferior sorts of creation, but, no doubt, after the Resurrection, we shall be able to create as God creates, and one of the delights of eternity will be the delight of creating.

You see, we are partakers of the Divine Nature, sons of God, made in the image of God. Is not that a great reason for respecting ourselves?

But there is another reason.

Jesus Christ has redeemed us. Each one of us is ransomed by His precious blood. For our sakes, because He loved and esteemed us, He took human nature upon Him. He was born of Mary, went about doing good, working miracles, was betrayed, deserted, condemned, crucified.

He saw that men, the noblest work of God, were being lost. They were straying from the right way, having no guide, they were going against the will of God, through ignorance, not knowing that will. He so esteemed that human nature which God had created, that He came from Heaven, and took it upon Him to restore it to its dignity, to bring it

back to obedience, and into the right path. He made Himself of no reputation, and took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, that He might free us from the bondage of sin, restore to us the reputation we had forfeited, and sanctify our frail flesh.

And once more.

You will live for ever, in body and soul. Your bodies will be raised, and made glorious, like unto Christ's glorious body, no more to see corruption. Now you receive your bodies for a little while. They grow, and become old, and decay. But you will receive your bodies again once more. You will wake up after Christ's likeness, endowed with strength, health, youth, and glory. No more shall they wax old, no more suffer pain, no more languish with want. They shall retain ever the bloom of youth. The soul which is now feeble and timorous will grow strong and confident. You have carried a light through a draughty passage, sheltering it behind your hand. It flickers, it seems almost extinguished, now and then it starts up, and casts a little gleam about it, and then scarce maintains its existence. Presently you come into a room, and then it burns brightly and steadily, and fills the apartment with light. Now you are carrying your

feebly-fluttering, flickering soul through the passage of life; it is subjected to draughts on all sides, seeking to extinguish it. But if you only succeed in saving your soul alive, in keeping that vital spark of heavenly flame burning, when you enter the house of Heaven, the mansion prepared for you, it will shine forth steadily, and with a glorious lustre.

Your mind also will live for ever. The mind of the animal cleaves to the earth. It thinks of, it cares for, only what will keep it alive, its eating and drinking, and warmth and comfort. But the mind of man is not satisfied with thinking of these things only. It searches out the mysteries of creation, it meditates on the marvels of grace, it watches the unfolding of the plans of God in history, it seeks everywhere evidence of the laws which He has imposed on all that He has made. It is ever restless, going through nature to find nature's God. We seem never to come to the end of the wonders of creation. The thoughts of God are very deep, and as God is infinite, His thoughts are infinite, and we never shall see to the end of all His doings. But in all eternity, our minds will be active, and will grow, and never be wearied with watching, exploring, and discovering more of God's wisdom and wondrous works.

Now I have given you three reasons why every man should hold himself in respect. Firstly—because he is made in the image of God. Secondly—because he has been redeemed by Christ. Lastly—because he is an heir of immortality. When I say that you should maintain self-respect, I mean that you should remember the dignity which is yours as a child of God, redeemed by Christ, and an heir of Heaven, and never act unworthily of your origin and privilege, and prospects. When the Prince of Wales, the son of king Henry 4th, spent his time in taverns, drinking and rioting with dissolute companions, getting into disreputable scrapes, and generally misconducting himself, he was rebuked for want of self-respect. He, with the blood royal flowing in his veins, and with the crown before him, did not walk worthy of his high calling and future prospects. You have something even better than royal blood in your veins, you have a spark of a divine soul in your bosoms: and you have the hope of inheriting not an earthly, but an eternal kingdom. Therefore, conduct yourselves irreproachably, uprightly, worthily of your high vocation in Christ Jesus.

It was a custom among the ancient Romans for a son to bear, hung round his neck, a piece of

silver or gold, on which was stamped his father's image. It was thought a great honour thus to be adorned There was a family illustrious for its virtues and the greatness of the great men it had reared. This was the family of the Scipios. At last there came a young Scipio, who forgot the dignity of his family, and the nobility of the name he bore, and disregarded the example of his father. He behaved so badly and unworthily, that the Senate of Rome decreed that the seal of his father should be taken from him, as he was unworthy to bear his father's image and name on his bosom.

A Christian bears the image of his Father, and Redeemer, and great Example, not on his breast, but in his heart; not stamped on silver or gold, but written deeply in the fleshy tables of his heart. He is bound to behave as a Christian, to walk worthy of his heavenly Father, and to follow the example of his Saviour. If he does not, he forfeits his right to be called a Christian.

"The Lord," says S. Paul, "knoweth them that "are His." How think you? By their conduct, by their self-respect. If they know that they are His by creation and redemption, and that they hope to be His in all eternity, then they will live as becomes Christians, they will avoid all unseemly

words and acts, they will seek in everything to maintain their honour as Christians, they will try to fulfil the will of God, for they are His sons ; they will use this world, and not abuse it, knowing that their true life and perfect condition will be hereafter Their souls will long for Heaven, for their God whose breath they are, their flesh will yearn for the Resurrection, when it will shake off its infirmities, and their minds will desire the sight of God, when they will attain to perfect knowledge.

SERMON XIV.

TEMPTATIONS.

S. JAMES IV. 7.

"*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*"

WHEN the children of Israel were in the wilderness, on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land, they were afflicted with fiery serpents; that is to say, they were stung by venomous snakes in great numbers, whose bite produced a burning in the wound and in the limb affected. A great number of the Israelites suffered, and many died. Then the distressed people came to Moses, and begged him to pray to God for them, that they might be delivered from the plague of these serpents. It is distinctly told us that what they asked was, "Pray unto the Lord, that He may take away "the serpents from us." Moses did so. Then the Lord answered Moses, "Make thee a fiery serpent, "and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass,

"that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh "upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of "brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to "pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when "he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

You see that God did not answer the prayer in the way the people wished, and that Moses expected. He did not take away the serpents from the camp. He left them there; but He did provide a means of healing those who had been bitten. I daresay this surprises you. You think how easy it would have been for God to speak the word, and destroy the serpents. He had but to bid Moses lift up his rod, and they would die. No doubt Moses, when he prayed, remembered the plague of the frogs in Egypt. Then Pharaoh had sent for Moses, and had said, "Intreat the Lord that He take away the frogs "from me and from my people." Then Moses had "cried unto the Lord because of the frogs which He "had brought against Pharaoh. And the Lord did "according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out "of the fields."

Again, when the plague of flies came upon Egypt—"a grievous swarm of flies into the house "of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into

"all the land of Egypt, and the land was corrupted "by reason of the swarm of flies;" then Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, "Entreat "for me." Then "Moses went out from Pharaoh "and entreated the Lord. And the Lord did "according to the word of Moses; and He removed "the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his ser- "vants, and from his people; there remained "not one."

Again, the Lord sent a plague of locusts in Egypt. "The locusts went up over the land of "Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt. "They covered the face of the whole earth, so that "the land was darkened; and they did eat every "herb of the field, and all the fruit of the trees, "which the hail had left; and there remained not "any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of "the field, through all the land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, "Entreat the Lord your God, that He may "take away from me this death only. And he "went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord. "And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, "which took away the locusts, and cast them into "the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in "all the coasts of Egypt."

No doubt, I say, Moses thought of all this, when the Israelites came to him, and besought him to entreat the Lord to take from them the plague of serpents with burning bites. And I think he must have prayed without the least doubt in his mind that God would comply with his prayer, with the same promptitude and completeness as in Egypt. Perhaps he said within himself, "I had but to pray "when a persecuting king, the enemy of God's "people, was afflicted with such discomforts as "frogs, and flies, and locusts. Now I shall pray "for the chosen people, those who are being guided "by God, those whom He has taken under His "special protection, and I shall pray for them to "be delivered from a much worse plague than frogs, "flies, and locusts, even from poisonous serpents, "which are causing them terrible agonies, and "killing numbers of them. Surely God will hear "me, and destroy the serpents instantly."

But it was not so. God did not destroy the serpents. He left them just as numerous as before, lurking in the scant grass, coiled up behind the stones, ready to dart fiercely on the unwary hand or foot, to bite and poison. He left them in swarms; He did not kill one.

When a man was walking hastily and incon-

siderately through the grass, all at once he felt a sharp pain in the calf of his leg, and something knitting itself about his ankle. He looked down, and found it was a snake, biting him just as if Moses had never prayed for the destruction of the serpents. When a boy was playing in the sand, and pulled the stones about to build castles with them, he felt a sting in his hand, and looked: there was a white circle about a little red mark, and a purple ring round it, and he felt a pain like fire in his hand, which began to swell,—just as he heard had happened to other boys before Moses had been asked to entreat the Lord to remove the plague.

When a girl went with her pitcher to the spring, as she was stooping and dipping the vessel, a black adder suddenly lanced at her out of the bank, and fastened on her arm. Before she got home her arm was so swollen that her sleeve had to be cut away, and her arm felt as if it had been thrust into a fire. And her mother said—This is just how another girl was stung yesterday, before Moses went into the tabernacle, and that girl died in agonies this morning.

But God did answer the prayer of Moses in a way he had not expected. He bade him make a brazen serpent, and promised that all who should

look thereon should be healed. God did not remove the plague, but He did provide a remedy for it. Now the man, and the boy, and the girl, who had been stung, instead of lying down and dying, hastened to the place where the brazen serpent had been set up. They raised their eyes to it, hanging on the pole, and were healed. The poison went out of the wound, the inflammation abated, and they all recovered. Why do you suppose God did not answer Moses exactly in the way that Moses expected? Why was it that God did not take away the fiery serpents at his prayer?

If you look at the results in the case of Pharaoh you will see. Directly that Pharaoh was relieved of the annoyance and discomforts of the plague, his heart was hardened, and his fear of God vanished. As long as the frogs, and the flies, and the locusts plagued him, he was humble and penitent; the moment they were gone, he was proud and defiant once more.

It would have been much the same with the Israelites. They were a stubborn and rebellious people, a people that set not their heart aright.

Again and again the people had rebelled against God, and murmured because He had brought them out of Egypt. They had murmured at Marah.

Directly they entered on the wilderness, they had complained and said, "Would to God we had died "in Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when "we did eat bread to the full," and then God had given them manna. They had murmured at Rephidim. They had lapsed into idolatry under Sinai. They complained of the manna and were given quails. They murmured when they heard the tidings of the spies, they murmured when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were swallowed up. They murmured at Kadesh; they were discouraged when they were journeying from Hor by way of the Red Sea, and then it was that God sent the serpents among them. He did not take away the plague, but left the serpents to torment the people,—

I. In order that they might retain a lively fear of God.

II. In order that they might learn to trust in God.

III. In order that they might learn circumspection.

Firstly—the constant danger from the snakes, and the frequent stings would remind them that they had trangressed against God, and had been rebellious; and that they had deserved His punishment. It would teach them to fear God.

Secondly—the presence of the brazen serpent

would show them that God loved them, abode in their midst, watched over them, and made provision for their healing. It was a constant witness to them, that though God was just, He was also merciful. Thus it would teach them to love God.

Thirdly—the incessant danger they were in from stings would oblige them to look about them very carefully to avoid danger It would teach them caution in all their acts. But not only so. The serpents were sent as a punishment for sin. Their continued presence would be a continued warning to them to be cautious in their thoughts and words; to be cautious of sinning against God with thoughts of rebellion and words of murmuring.

Well, now, in conclusion, my children, learn this. You, like the Israelites, are going a journey to the Promised Land, through the wilderness of this world. And you will be surrounded with temptations, stinging serpents, passions which are like fire, and which make you burn when wounded with them. How is it that God has allowed you to be tempted and tried in your journey? Why did He not bid you go through life without fiery passions and burning temptations? Because He saw that it was needful for you to be thus tried. The temptations you will undergo will thus serve to

make you fear God, love God, and walk circumspectly.

They will teach you fear; will make you have a godly fear which worketh repentance, not to be repented of. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. You will see how liable you are to be wounded by your unruly wills and lusts, and knowing how holy God is, and how He seeks your perfection, you will walk ever in dread; feeling your own infirmity, knowing your own weakness, seeing the dangers that surround you, the sins that so easily beset you. And you will love God the more, because, when tempted, you will find that He gives you strength to resist; when burning with the stings of passion, His Cross cools the fever, and assuages the pain. When suffering, and fallen, you will creep to the Cross, and looking up to Him who hangs thereon, will find pardon and restoration.

And also you will learn circumspection. Circumspection means "looking about you." You will be cautious how you walk, careful where you go, watchful against evil, wary against danger. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," saith our Lord. If we were never assailed by the temptations of our flesh, we should not watch. But having felt them, and found how fiery and

dangerous they are, we learn a vigilant walk. You can never be destroyed by evil, unless you will. Satan is like a chained dog, he can bark, but he cannot bite you unless you go within his reach. No Israelite need have died of the fiery serpents unless he wilfully disregarded ordinary precautions, and kept away from the healing serpent of brass.

If you only keep, in life, the fear of God before your eyes, and love Him, and walk circumspectly, you will go through the valley of serpents, and take them up, and they will not hurt you. The fiery temptations of the flesh will no more destroy you than the adder out of a bundle of sticks that fastened on St. Paul's hand killed him. He shook off the venomous beast into the fire, and felt no hurt. You may be stung over and over again by temptations, but if you, like S. Paul, shake them off directly they fasten upon you, or if, when you feel the poison working in your veins, you fly to the Cross of Christ, you will take no harm.

SERMON XV.

INNOCENCY.

PSALM XXXVII. 38.

"Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last."

I AM going to tell you a story.

There was once on a time a king on his way to his capital which was a long way off, and his road lay through a village. As he went along, the villagers crowded to see him, and stood ranged all along the street. Among them was a young, timid girl, poorly dressed. As the king went by, he saw her look sadly and supplicatingly towards him, and he stopped his horse, and beckoned her to draw near. She modestly disengaged herself from the throng, and advanced. Then he asked her her name, and whether she were a native of that village, for, in truth, she hardly looked like a common country girl. She answered that she was not born there, but was

a native of his capital, of that she was by birthright a citizen, but through her parent's fault she had been banished from it, and their great wealth, estates, and titles had been forfeited.

"And on what do you live?" asked the king, much touched.

"I spin for my daily bread," she answered, "I earn enough to clothe and feed myself, and that is all."

"And are you here all alone in your exile?" asked the king.

"No, sire! I have five brothers."

"But," he further asked, "do they not support you, and give you of the fruit of their labour?"

"Sire!" exclaimed the maiden, opening her eyes wide, "they never give me anything, but they often beg or borrow of me, and sometimes reduce me to great straits."

"Maiden," said the king, "I will enquire into this matter. Here, take this ring, keep it till I return, which will be shortly;—I cannot tell you the day, but it will be before long. When I return bring me my ring, and I shall remember you by it, and if I have found that your story is true, I will reinstate you in all your family honours and wealth. But," he added with a warning gesture, "if you part

with my ring, I shall hesitate about trusting you."

Then the king put his ring on her finger, and rode away.

Not long after he was gone, the news of what had happened came to the ears of the girl's brothers. One of these was a painter, another was a musician, the third a cook, the fourth a gardener, and the fifth was a draper. As soon as the painter could, he left his work and hastened to his sister, and looked at the ring. "What a lovely ring!" he exclaimed, "the gold is so fine, and the stone in it sparkles with all kinds of colours. Do, dear sister, lend or give it me, I want to paint a figure with rings on the fingers, and this will come in useful as a pattern. Let me have the ring, and I will paint you the most beautiful picture you ever saw; indeed I will hang pictures all round your room, if you will give it me."

"No, brother," said the girl, "I cannot part with the ring, I have promised to keep it; besides, when I receive my fortune at the king's return, I shall be so rich, that I can buy as many pictures as I wish."

The painter went away dejected, and the musician came next. He also admired the ring, and, of course, he also wanted it. "Look here, sister," he said, "lend me the ring. I am going to a concert,

and I want to appear as well dressed and with as many ornaments as I can. Lend it me just for a bit, and I will give you a ticket for the concert, and you shall hear the most beautiful music for nothing."

"Thank you, brother," said the maid, "I do not know when the king will return, so I must not part with the ring for a moment." So he also went away disappointed. Then came the third brother, the cook; and he also wanted the ring. "My dear sister," he said, "I know how badly you are off, and what poor fare you have. It has always been a trouble to me to think how scanty and mean are your repasts. If you will give me the ring, I will send you every day the very best dishes I can cook, and the most delicious cakes and sweetmeats in my shop."

"Thank you, brother," answered the damsel, "I fare quite as well as I want. My meals are simple but sufficient, and I had rather wait till I receive my fortune, before feasting, than run the risk of losing it, by giving up the ring."

The next to arrive was the gardener. "My good sister," he said, "come into my garden, and let me show you what beautiful flowers I have. How sweet these roses smell, and how fragrant is that wreath of jessamine. Look at that bed of thyme, what a

delicious scent it exhales. My sister, if you will give me your ring, I will provide you every day with a bunch of the most perfumed of my flowers."

"I cannot part with the ring," answered the girl, "I have promised to keep it, as I value it above your flowers."

Then came the youngest brother, the draper, and he arrived with a number of boxes. "I have brought you," he said, "some of my most fashionable dresses, for you to see. Did you ever cast your eyes on such laces and such silks? And look at the style of the costumes! You will find nothing like them anywhere; and you shall have your pick of them for a trifle."

"Thank you, brother," began the sister, when he interrupted her, "My dear, I am afraid you suffer from cold in winter, I think you really ought to take more care for your health, and wear furs. Furs are now very fashionable, and happen to be extraordinarily cheap. Look here, at this beautiful mantle, lined with fur; I want nothing for it, but that little ring on your finger By the way, let me look at it. Gold, do you call it? It is only brass. Do you think that stone a diamond? You are quite mistaken, it is paste. However, as I am your brother, and as I said the word, you shall have the fur cloak

for it. I shall be happy to accommodate you."

"Thank you, dear brother," said the maiden,—but she hesitated, for she longed to have the lovely laces and silks, even more than the furs, "thank you, brother, I must refuse them, I cannot part with the ring." But she said it with a sigh.

Children! Do you understand my story? It is an allegory. The soul is the maiden, banished from heaven, robbed of her high estate and great privileges, by the fault of our first parents, Adam and Eve. But God has looked on her, and has promised her restoration; only the soul must be tried a while, and must patiently wait His coming, and, above all, must preserve the ring of Innocence.

The soul has five brothers, the senses—sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling; and these are continually assailing her to give up to them her innocency, The soul is ever in danger of forfeiting ner baptismal innocence through those temptations that come in through the senses. All sorts of pleasures and comforts are offered by the senses. But in exchange is asked the ring of Innocency.

What says David, "Keep innocency, and take "heed unto the thing that is right, for that shall "bring peace at the last." It is as though he were thinking of this story, and he said to you, "My dear

"children, as you pass through life, all sorts of "things will be offered you, pleasures which may be "harmless; enjoy them, so long as they are harm-"less; but if they are offered you in *exchange for* "*the ring*, if you may not enjoy them without sur-"rendering it, then do the thing that is right. Refuse "the offer, and keep, rather, your Innocency It is "quite true that you may get some pleasure for a "while, but you will never be happy at having "surrendered your ring. It will always trouble "you that you have forfeited the good opinion of "your King, and lost His favour, by breaking His "commandment; the pleasures of sin are but for "a season, the pleasures of obedience are eternal. "Therefore, I repeat, keep Innocency, and you will "find that it will bring peace at last. When the "King comes again, and asks for you, you will "step forward with a serene face, and happy con-"science, and He will receive you with joy, and take "you with Him to His glorious kingdom, and "there, at the last, you will taste of that peace "which passes man's understanding, that peace "which no man can take from you."

Dear children! I should like you to remember this story. There was no harm in the girl's admiring her brother's paintings, or listening to her

brother's music, or eating her brother's cakes, or gathering her brother's flowers, or putting on the laces and silks, or furs of her brother. Harm only began when she was asked to give up the ring for these things. Directly she parted with that, sin began. So there will be no harm in your enjoying the beautiful things you see, and the lovely music you may hear, no harm in enjoying things good to eat, or drink, or smell; there is no sin in wearing fine dresses,—sin begins directly you give up Innocency for them

Do you know a diamond when you see it? It is a perfectly transparent stone, like a drop of clear water, or a bit of cut glass. But it shoots out all sorts of coloured rays, red, and yellow, and blue, and green, and orange, and violet. So innocence is perfectly transparent and pure, but it has many lovely coloured graces in it. First there is modesty, then there is gentleness, then there is simplicity, then there is truthfulness. Indeed I cannot number them all. Take care how you lose or tarnish any of these graces; take care how you forfeit any baptismal grace for the sake of what pleasures the senses may give you. David gives you very simple advice, and advice you can easily understand and follow, "Do the thing that is right." In all you do,

in the midst of your pleasures, in all allurements, take care always to "do the thing that is right," and then you need not fear, you will keep your ring, and you will have peace at the last. Always preserve in your heart the remembrance of your King, and the thought that He is coming again, then you will seek ever to "do the thing that is right," and none of the senses, none of the temptations that surround you will entice you to part with your ring; and when the King comes in His glorious majesty at the last, He will restore you to your privileges, raise you to honour, receive you into the heavenly Jerusasalem, and give you peace at the last.

SERMON XVI.

THE WELL OF GRACE.

NUMBERS xxi. 17.

"*Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it.*

THE Israelites were in the desert. They had left the hill country of Moab, and the brooks of Arnon. The hot white sand lay around them, here and there a barren hill-side baked by the sun, the grey rocks hot, and scarcely affording any shade under a vertical sun. No green herbage, no date trees flinging a scant shadow; overhead a cloudless sky, under foot a burning desert.

Faint and weary they toiled on, their camels with drooping heads, the people with failing hearts; and now and then, may be, a poor camel, exhausted, fell on the desert to rise no more. The owners unpacked their goods, transferred them to the back of another and more enduring beast, and left the poor camel behind, a speck on the desert, the prey of instantly gathering vultures.

SERMON XVII.

FLOWERS.

(SPRING.)

SONG OF SOLOMON II. 11, 12.

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth."

OF all God's creations, the flowers are, perhaps, the most beautiful. There is something in them which attracts and arrests our thoughts, and fills us with delight, above the attraction and delight exercised by other things in God's world.

How wonderful is their variety, and how glorious is their beauty in various ways! There is not a climate, however ungenial it may seem, on which the sun shines, where there are not flowers. Nothing I remember, astonished me so much, some years ago, when I went to Iceland, as to see the flowers there I thought, of course, there would be very few. There it is too cold for trees to grow higher than you can reach, the willow creeps along the soil,

and clings to it, afraid to rise into the icy blast. A little dwarf birch unfurls its glistening leaves, and catches the sun in sheltered nooks, there is scarcely any grass to be seen, except just round a farm-house, where the soil is carefully manured. But there is no lack of flowers. Clasping the earth are masses of carmine campion, between the rocks bloom great tufts of purple crane's-bill, over the stones scramble the mountain avens with its large eight lemon-white leaves and sunny heart. By the brooks it is as though bags of fresh coined gold pieces had been poured forth in greatest profusion, so abundant, so shining are the marsh marigolds ; and on the smooth mossy slopes are sky-blue gentianellas, as the stars for number, and as the sand of the sea for multitude.

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; "they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I "say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory "was not arrayed like one of these." Our Lord pointed to the flowers, and taught His disciples a lesson from them—a very simple lesson, Trust in Providence. But that is not the only lesson that may be learned from the flowers. Indeed, they teach a great abundance of lessons. Each little plant contains in it a text or moral, wrapped up,

as the motto in a comfit. Some flowers seem to me to represent certain Christian graces, others show us God's care and providence, others teach us moral lessons.

Children! you're flowers of God, strewn o'er the earth,
Known of God, loved of God, cherished from birth!

On the bleak mountain top, deathful to climb,
Fragrant to God alone blooms the wild thyme.

Down in the busy vale, trodden by feet,
Roses and eglantine make summer sweet.

Deep in the forest heart, where none may spy
Bluebells, anemonies, dress for God's eye.

Rooted in blackest slime, festering, foul,
Holds up the lily-queen, stainless, her bowl.

Prim in the garden-beds, rank on the wold,
Some toss'd by stormy winds, some lapped from cold;

Yet the dew drencheth the homeliest flower,
Yet the light pierceth the leafiest bower.

No flower too common-place, no herb too small!
Love of God compasseth, glorifies all.

Children, dear flowers of God! grown here beneath,
When Christ His Crown assumes, ye'll form that wreath.

Of the many, many lessons that may be gathered from the flowers, I can only give you a very few,

lest I overburden your memory. But I give you some to lead you to look at the flowers as you look at Holy Scripture, for something in them which you may read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

In the first place I would have you note the infinite variety of flowers, and how they thrive in all sorts of places. High up on the mountains, at the very edge of the snow is found the purple soldanella, the white crocus, and the blue hepatica. Down in the sultry plain blooms the red poppy, the white dog-daisy, and the blue corn-flower ; in the cold, raw winds of March, the dearly-loved snowdrop shakes its pure bell. Late in the autumn, when around lie dead leaves, and the garden is black with frosted dahlias, in a cranny of the old wall is still smiling the pink crane's bill. Some flowers are so hardy they will brave any frost, others will die unless protected from every wind. The primrose loves the hedge by the road side, the daisy stars the lawn, the hare-bell tosses on the moor, the violet hides under a bank, the blue-bell lurks in the coppice. The willow herb throws up its head of pink flowers out of the slimy ditch, the yellow stone-crop lies like little patches of sun on the tile roof. The thrift covers the sea marshes with a mantle of shot pink, the samphire clings to

the crags high above the foam, the mignonette grows by the side of the cornfield, the pansy blooms among the reaped stubble. Everywhere, in all sorts of situations, in all sorts of climates, out of all sorts of soils, spring up the flowers God has made. Everywhere, in all sorts of situations, in all ranks of life, in all conditions of life, out of every social deposit, the saints of God arise. He has His chosen ones in king's palaces, and in poor men's cottages, in the country and in the town, among shepherds, gardeners, students, clerks, nobles, beggars. In the workhouse, in the farm-yard, in the counting house, in the kitchen, in the lordly castle, a saint of God may grow. Everywhere the grace of God shines and matures the seed of eternal life, and causes the flowers of a Christian life to unfold. And as each flower is specially suited to the soil in which it grows, and to the climate which surrounds it, so it is with the Christian graces. There are special graces, special virtues, according to class, and place, and circumstances.

Therefore, beware, children, how you despise those who are not exactly like yourselves, who have not your special gifts. They have their beauty, and glory, and gifts, seen by God, loved by God; seek to find them out, and to admire them. Do not

scorn those who are not reproductions of yourselves in other spheres.

It is very likely that at certain times you may be discouraged, and think that you cannot serve God in the place where you are, you have so many difficulties to contend against, those around you are so wicked. But do not fear. God's flowers will grow everywhere. What can be fouler than the filth in which the water-lily has her roots, the slime in which the newt and the worm wriggle, and yet, what more stainless or sunlike than the flower? I have known lads in mechanical workshops, surrounded by men blaspheming, cursing, doing all in their power to degrade and brutalise the boys associated with them. And yet, some of these lads have maintained a really heroic Christian faith and walk before God. I have known girls working in factories, associated with others whose conversation was foul, whose example was vile and utterly shameless, yet live to God with a purity of soul and stainlessness of mind even, as well as of conduct, such as would have been thought impossible, and would have been impossible, but for the grace of God surrounding them.

I beseech you, dear children, never suppose that your situation in life is such that in it you cannot

live to God, and glorify God. Find me soil exposed to the light, on which no flower will grow, and then, perhaps, I will allow that there are conditions in which Christian life is impossible. Wherever you are, grow to God. Whatever be your situation, God's grace is sufficient for you. He has placed you there, in order that you might adorn that situation, and make it beautiful before Him. He can make the desert bloom as the rose.

Now learn something more. The first growth of the seed or root is hidden. The process is unseen. I dare say you know the rule to be observed with hyacinth bulbs grown in glasses. They have to be put away in the dark till they are rooted. If exposed to light, they are not likely to do well. So must it be with the spiritual growth of the soul, its first processes must be hidden. There must be no display of religion, no talking about it, no demonstrative piety; all that sort of show leads to poor flowering. The rooting and germinating must be hidden deep down in the soft soil of the inner heart. It is afterwards that the flower of a Christian life expands. Now for another lesson.

Have you ever observed a flower in its growth from a seed? The seed leaves unfurl,—two little leaves, quite unlike those the plant will eventually

bear. These open, and are extended like little hands towards Heaven. They are very sensitive. On them depends the life of the plant. If those little appealing hands be destroyed, the plant will cast up no more. It will rot away underground, and die. Like the seed leaves of the plant are children's prayers. These are the first manifestations of the soul's life. The little hands are lifted up to God appealingly, often ignorantly, but trustfully and lovingly. Most essential to the spiritual life are children's spiritual beginnings. They must be carefully guarded. Beware, children, how you suffer your early prayers to cease, to die. On them depends the life and health of your soul in after life. Cease to pray in childhood, and the power of prayer will go from you, never, may be, to be recovered. The little leaves drink in the sunlight and the sweet spring air, and carry them to the root below in the dark, where they nurture the shoot which will develope into foliage and flowers So do your early prayers bring to your souls the grace of God that swells and prepares in them the future Christian character, which will be manifested before God and man in its proper season. Do you know that, with a microscope, in the little germ of the plant, deep-seated in the soil, may be discerned the pat-

tern of the future plant, with its leaves and flower. It is said that with a powerful glass the future oak may be descried in the germ of the acorn. So the future Christian character you will bear lies hidden in your heart. It is there that lies hidden the type of Christian life God has predestined that you shall live, the type of Christian life God sees will be most fit for the situation in which you will be placed, and His grace and favour are abundant to make it grow and spread and attain perfection, as He has designed; but much depends on the seed leaves being undestroyed, on the childish prayers ascending to God, on the childish soul opening to God, drinking in His grace which alone can perfect the germ, and make it grow into a plant.

There is so much to be learned from the flowers, children, that I could go on for a long time expounding to you the parables that lie veiled in them. But I have said to you quite enough to-day; and if you choose to look, you will find the lessons in the flowers everywhere about you, repaying your search. To-day I wish you to carry off with you only three lessons which I have drawn from them.

First. Seeing that there are flowers adorning every sort of soil, growing in every kind of situa

tion, thriving in every clime ; remember that it is so with the spiritual graces also. Wherever you are, whatever your calling or portion, you can adorn it with a Christian life.

Secondly. Avoid precociousness in your religion. Let it be hidden in the heart, and not made a show of. The health of the flower depends upon the rooting and germinating taking place in the dark, so does healthy religion require concealment in the soul.

Thirdly. As the life of the flower depends on the seed leaves, so does your spiritual life, and your attainment of the Christian character God has predestined for you, depend on your childish prayers. If the spiritual life dies in childhood, it is only revived afterwards by a miracle.

SERMON XVIII.

DUMB ANIMALS.

(SUMMER.)

ISAIAH XI. 6—9.

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

WHEN Adam and Eve were in Paradise, the beasts were not afraid of them. They lived surrounded by the beautiful birds of a more tropical climate, and by many wild beasts which we now chase, without inspiring fear in them, and without fearing them. How beautiful it must have been in Eden, with the peacocks in flights diving among the branches, and perching on the boughs, the sun flashing on their gorgeous tails, and the bird of Paradise, and the lyre birds fluttering among the leaves, and humming birds like living jewels sporting

about the flowering shrubs. On the sweet, grassy lawns the deer and antelopes grazed, and did not start and fly when Eve came from out of the forest, but allowed her to stroke their dappled sides. The spotted panther and the brindled tiger played at the feet of Adam, and licked his hand as he caressed them, and he had no fear. And think of the gorgeous butterflies—purple, golden, scarlet, glancing here and there in the sun rays that fell between the trees, dancing in circles of living fire about some tall sweet-scented orchis, and then speeding off to flicker and spin about the more beautiful head of Eve, as she sat on a bank of violets watching their gambols, and wondering at the beautiful flower.

How delightful it must have been for Adam and Eve, as they wandered about Eden, to have found that love and confidence met them at every turn! The little rabbit sat up to be stroked, the fawn came forward to have a few leaves given it, the great shaggy bison bent his neck to feel the hand of man, and the lion paced by the side of his master, as the dog does now, looking up in his face with trust and affection.

It was before man fell that God brought the animals to Adam, and he named them. "Out of

"the ground the Lord God formed every beast of "the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought "them unto Adam to see what he would call them: "and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, "that was the name thereof. And Adam gave "names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, "and to every beast of the field."

When man fell, then this mutual trust came to an end, only a few, a very few animals clung to man—the faithful dog, and some he kept that he might supply himself with food and clothing from their milk, or flesh, and wool or skins—as the sheep, and the ox, and the reindeer.

But mutual suspicion and fear fell between man and most of the living animals. He hunted and killed them, and they were forced to fly and hide from his arrows, and walk wary of the traps he set for their feet. They no longer loved their master, they feared him. They no longer sought him but shunned him. He became their greatest and most persistent enemy.

The largest and finest bird of our northern shores was the Gaire-fowl or great Auk. Many hundreds of years ago, great multitudes of these birds lived on our coasts, and swam in our seas. On the sandy shores of Denmark are great mounds of rubbish,

thrown away by the old Danes who once lived there, and from these heaps we can make out on what they lived. There are enormous quantities of oyster shells, and also bones of the Gaire-fowl ; so that at one time this bird must have abounded on the Danish coast Not one has been seen there for a century at least. Near Orkney it has become more and more scarce, as every Gaire-fowl seen was shot, till 1840, when the last bird was killed. Since then not one of this species has been found anywhere, though great search has been made for it. The whole family of the Gaire-fowl has been swept off the face of the earth by man, armed with the gun.

There is a splendid butterfly, called from its size and the royal colour of its wings the Purple Emperor. It used to be tolerably frequent in England, but has been so persistently chased, and beaten down, and killed, that now it has become rare, and if much more persistently hunted will disappear altogether. I see in the newspapers this year that the Greenland fishery has been most unsuccessful, no whales having been met with. It is thought that they have been so diligently pursued and killed in preceding years that they have been nearly exterminated. So poor seals are killed for their warm furs, and the furs are becoming more and more expensive, because

seals are becoming scarcer, and they are being killed at such a rate that before long they will cease to exist.

One cannot be surprised at the animals fearing man, who seeks remorselessly to blot them out of God's Book of Life. As there are certain industries in the commonwealth necessary to the commonwealth, so are there families in the commonwealth of creation, and they have their proper place and function in it. But man disturbs this economy of nature, and seeks to root them out for his present advantage, regardless of the loss which will affect posterity.

When Christ had been baptized in Jordan, by S. John, He went into the wilderness for forty days, and, as S. Mark tells us, He was there with the wild beasts. As the first Adam was in the garden of Paradise with the wild beasts, the second Adam was in the wilderness with the wild beasts. And as sinless Adam was surrounded by their love and confidence, so I doubt not was the second Adam, who was without sin. The beasts did not fear Him; they with their dim instinct recognised that He was their protector. I have no doubt that they ministered to Him in their way, that they fawned on Him, came to Him, and sought His caresses. It

is said that a horse will not tread on a child, that the wildest horse will be gentle with a baby. It reverences the innocence in it. In a dim way it sees in it the guilelessness of unfallen Adam.

Indian mothers will trust their babes to the protection of elephants. I have read of a great elephant set to drive off flies from a little sleeping infant, with a tree branch which it held in its trunk, and whisked over the skin of the unconscious child, patiently enduring all the time the tormenting stings of venomous flies attacking its own skin. It forgot itself in its love and solicitude for the human babe.

And how faithful and brave in defence of its master or mistress is the dog! How forgiving after injury done it!

When Christ comes again, and there are new heavens and a new earth, do you suppose there will be no birds, beasts and insects in it? I do not doubt that there will be Look with a microscope into the drops of water, examine the air—everywhere you will find life. And life is God's creation, the manifestation of God's activity. Just as you must be thinking, so God must be creative. He cannot do nothing. In the kingdom of the resurrection, His wisdom, love, power, will be mani-

fested quite as plainly and gloriously as now. There will be a fresh outburst of creative power. Everywhere—everywhere—will be life: the vast expanse of infinite space will teem with life, and life in an infinity of forms and modes. Created beings are the manifested thoughts of God. In the new heavens and new earth, He will be thinking everywhere, and we shall read His thoughts everywhere in fresh forms of beauty. In that blessed kingdom there will be no more suspicion and enmity between the beasts and man, for there will be no sin in the new heavens and new earth, and all will be restored to the footing they were on in Eden. Love and confidence will come back, and the birds and beasts and fishes and insects will love man as their king, and seek his favour, and delight in recognition from him. "They shall not hurt nor "destroy in all my holy mountain." The broken links of love, binding all creation together, will be welded again; and just as the golden sunshine bathes, illuminates, warms and gladdens all creatures, so will universal charity embrace, rejoice and unite all the members of the one great family of Creation.

If you have followed what I have been saying, my children, I am sure that one thought must have

risen in your mind—the thought that, as far as possible, you should try to live in love with the inferior creation, to be gentle to the dumb animals, to encourage them to trust you, to try to undo, as much as you can, the evil effects of the Fall, in this matter as in others. If you are kind to animals, they speedily begin to recognize it, and recover their confidence in you. Last summer, I was in the mountains of Bavaria, and one day I went through a wood, and came out on a little green glade strewn with gentianellas and pink primulas. There were many sheep feeding there, without anyone looking after them. The moment they saw me, they ran up to me, crowded about me, and thrust their noses into my hand. When these came, other sheep further up the mountain, hearing the rapid tinkle of the bells round their necks as they ran to me, came scampering down as well, and tried also to push up to me. The sheep followed me nearly two miles, and I could not get rid of them, till I jumped over a stream, which they were afraid to cross. They followed me, because their shepherd boys were so kind to them that they had lost all fear of man, and looked on him instead as their best friend.

I never like to see cruelty to animals in man, because it is one of the evidences how deeply the

Fall has eaten out the love from the heart of man, destroyed the recollection of the friendship that once subsisted between him and the dumb animals in Paradise, and will subsist again in the kingdom of the Resurrection.

Do you, children, be tender-hearted to all God's creatures. He made them, as He made you. They are thoughts of His mind just as you are; they are your feeble brothers and sisters in His great family. We are all one in God: we all proceed from Him, we all live in Him, and we shall all return to Him. We men are His eldest sons, but He has in His house other children—the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and the creeping things that move on the face of the earth. The great S. Francis was wont to call all animals his brothers and sisters: and he was right They were so. When S. Paul bids you "Love as brethren, "be pitiful, be courteous," I do not think that this applies only to our intercourse with Christians, but with all men, nay more, with all creation: love the animals, and the birds, be pitiful to the feeble creatures God has made, be kindly and courteous even to the beasts. Love as brethren the flowers of the field, and the birds that sing in the bushes, for ye are all the children of the one God.

If you have read the lives of the saints, you will see how lovingly they lived with animals. The beasts saw in their harmlessness and kindliness a return to the innocence of Paradise, and accordingly shook off their distrust, and drew near to them. What pretty stories there are in the lives of the saints of their tenderness to animals! Sometimes birds would come and perch on their hands or shoulders, and sing there. Often hunted hares or stags would take refuge in their laps, or in their cells, from the pursuit of the hounds.

Avoid all cruelty to animals. Do not forget that they are members of your family; and though indeed, in a fallen world, suffering and death are their lot, and their death is necessary for the sustenance of man, yet do your best to mitigate their sufferings, and make their lives happy by your kindness.

The Jews say that when Moses was keeping the sheep of Jethro, a lamb ran away and lost itself in the desert. He went after it, and pursued it a great distance, till the little creature fell panting and footsore on the ground, unable to go further. Then Moses said to it, "Little lamb! didst thou think I "sought to hurt thee that thou didst fly me? Nay, "it was in love that I went after thee, and now in "love I will bear thee home in my bosom." And

when God saw his gentleness to the lamb, He said, "This man shall feed my people Israel."

You may be very sure, children, that if you show gentleness and love to God's animal creation, He will be well pleased with you, for of Him it is said, "His mercy is over all His works."

SERMON XIX.

THE CORN-FIELD.

(AUTUMN.)

MATT. XII. 1.

"At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath-day through the corn; and His disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat."

CAN you not imagine that quiet Sabbath afternoon walk through the ripening corn-fields? The sun is declining in the western sky, there is not a cloud in the blue heavens, the breath of wind stirs the wheat-field now white with harvest. To-morrow busy reapers will be here with the sickle, to begin the great work of the year—the cutting and carrying of the corn. Then the heavy ears and the light ears, the scarlet poppy and the blue-bottle, and the purple corn-cockle will be mown down together.

As Jesus and the twelve walk through the corn-fields, they are hungry, and they pluck the ripe ears, rub them in their hands, blow away the

light husk, and eat the hard brown-yellow grains that remain in their palms.

There are many lessons that the corn-fields teach.

The world, children, is one great corn-field, and you are growing in it. Now a question arises, are you growing there as corn, or as the poppy, the cockle, and the blue-bottle? Are you growing there to be of use, or only for show, to be of advantage in your generation, or only to make a display in it?

In the early stages, nothing is visible but the fine green shoots of the wheat above the brown soil, presently up come other leaves, and wheat and weed grow together. The wind of spring ripples over the green field, and weed and wheat blow and glance in the soft light air together, the sun shines down and warms both, the warm rains moisten and nourish both, the lark carols aloft above both, the white spring butterflies dance over both. All grow together, weed and wheat, the useful corn, and the useless poppy: no hand is thrust in to sort out weed from wheat. Summer comes on. The sun grows hotter, the corn ears appear, and are hung all over with little trembling dust-like particles, suspended by hair-like threads.

What are these? The flower of the wheat. The

flower! The gaudy poppy shakes his scarlet head, blazing like red fire amidst the corn, and despises the little feathery dusty flower of the wheat. The blue-bottle expands its glorious azure flower, and says, "Look at me! Did you ever see such a lovely "flower as this? See how my dark blue head is "crowned with nine stars, as though I were a "saint." And the cockle—

> "Everywhere about us are they glowing,
> Some like stars, to tell us spring is born;
> Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,
> Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn."

The corn-cockle, so conspicuous in its beauty, has obtained, and well deserves its name of crown of the field.

Whoever passes by, through the corn fields, sees the purple flower, and admires it. But the farmer loves it not, for its seeds contain a noxious element, which greatly injures the corn around, and fills his flour with black specks. When ripe, the capsule contains black glossy aromatic seeds, and in them is the mischievous saponine. While the wheat has been ripening wholesome grain, the corn-cockle has been maturing poisonous seeds. Both plants drank of the same dew, basked in the same sun

light, were fanned by the same breezes ; the wheat made little show of flower, but has produced a precious grain ; the cockle blazed with beauty, and ripens an injurious seed.

Look at the showy poppy ! What gorgeous petals they are, redder than the rose, gayer than the carnation, but there is a dark black stain about the heart of the flower, and when you pick the flower, almost at once the petals fail and drop off ! If gayer than others, they are more transient. And the beautiful blue-bottle is a flower, the presence of which is not pleasant to the reaper's eye. Its hard tough stalk resists the sickle, and turns its edge, for which reason it used to be given an expressive name.

Now, my children, in the field of the world you are growing up. We cannot tell as yet what you will be ; indeed it depends mostly on yourselves, whether you will be good wheat or worthless weed, whether you will yield good grain, or make a great and passing show as the poppy, or prove stubborn, ornamental, but useless as the blue-bottle, or be noxious as the cockle.

It seems to me that the great defect in these three flowers is, that they live for show, their object seems to be to shine in the world, attract admiration,

get praise. They think of their appearance, not of their grain. The wheat makes no show of flower, but ripens a rich and precious ear of corn. The poppy, and the blue-bottle, and the cockle live for their flowers not for their seed. The flower is beautiful, but the seed is nought or noxious. With the wheat it is otherwise, the flower is nothing, and the corn is all in all.

I would have you, children, make up your minds early what you are going to be in God's field, wheat or poppies; whether you are going to yield grain or blossom, whether you will be profitable or ornamental.

I speak first to you girls. You will be called to live in the world, and to be, to some extent, ornaments in it. You will dress more gaily than boys, wear smart gowns, and ribbons, and feathers, whereas boys will clothe themselves in sober colours. There is, therefore, much more danger in your growing up to be cockle, and poppy and blue-flower. You are much more tempted to live for personal appearance, to think of it, to make it the object of your great ambition. You will be liable to feel an ambition to out-blazen other girls with your ribbons and artificial flowers, to force yourself into notice, and draw eyes on you. That is a

woman's great temptation. She is naturally inclined to put on gay petals like the flowers.

Now I do not say that you should shun pretty and becoming dress, and not give it a thought. All I say is, you should not live for it, you should not let dress and appearance be the object of your lives, or your seed will be worthless or noxious, your heart will grow black like that of the poppy, or your neck stiff like the blue-bottle, or your words and works will scatter poison like the cockle. The grape, like the corn, lives for its fruit, not for its flower. The blossom of the vine is small and insignificant, but what fruit is like the grape? Yet the apple, and the pear, and the peach, and the cherry have flowers very lovely, and fruit very sweet; but their flowers are simple and modest, and make no great display. I think that all the most showy flowers are without edible fruit. Dress modestly, becomingly, and prettily, against that there is no law; but as you value all that is holy, all that is eternal, do not let dress occupy your thoughts. Men also may live for appearances only. They do not usually trouble themselves much about what they put on, there are not many fops in the world, and everyone knows that these are fools. But a man may live for appearances without thinking

much of his personal appearance. He does so when he lives for display, when he lives to show off his wealth, or his influence, or his knowledge ; that is, when he uses all he has got ostentatiously.

There was a Duke of Tyrol, who went by the name of Frederick with the Empty Pockets. He had a little money in the coffer, so he spent it all in gilding the roof of the balcony that overhung the public square in Innsbrück. It is there still, with some of the gold still adhering to the tiles. There are plenty of men who act like Frederick with the Empty Pockets, all they have is laid on as exterior gilding, everything goes in making a great display. If they have money, it is exhibited in the most offensive and vulgar profusion ; if they have a little learning, it is lugged in by the ears on all occasions ; if they have some position, it is made the most of. They live to be seen of men, they talk to be heard of men, they think how they may posture and prance before men They think nothing of what good they can do with what is given them, what rich fruit they can produce that will profit the world. Their thoughts are only on to-day.

There is still a worse form of this ostentation, which was rebuked by our Lord,—that is pious ostentation. The Pharisees when they prayed,

sought a corner of the market place, where they might be seen ; when they gave alms, had a trumpet blown before them, that a crowd might be collected to witness their charity. Our Lord said to them that they had their reward. They prayed and gave alms only to gain applause in this world, and they got it, and there was an end of it. But those who prayed in secret, and gave to the poor in secret, He promised should be rewarded hereafter. They lived for the future, for the harvest, not for the present ; for the corn, not for the flower. Their work would profit, the other would not. When the poppy and the cockle were tied in bundles to be burnt, they would be gathered into the heavenly garner as precious wheat.

Gathered in bundles to be burned! Yes, that is the terrible end of the weed. Those gallant flaunting poppies, the blue-bottles with their crowns of stars like saints, in this world, but so stiff and stubborn in their necks, those handsome cockle harbouring noxious seed—that is their end. The gay petals drop off, their beauty fades away—they are seen then to be weeds, and weeds only, if not poisonous, at least, useless. Away with them, separate them from good wheat! They have no place in the garner!

The great lesson that I wish to impress on you, children, to day, is, to live for the future, and not for the present ; to be concerned what fruit you shall bring forth, not what show you shall make. If you live for show, you live for this world, and the fashion of this world passeth away. The great harvest day will try every man's work what it shall be.

There is no spectacle in this world, girls, so sad as that of an elderly lady who has lived for display of her beauty when a girl, left without beauty, and nothing to live for, nothing to display in old age. She may dye her hair, and paint, and choke up her wrinkles, and dress and talk youthfully, but the sight is most horrible, it makes one shudder. Scarcely less sad is the sight of a man who has been ostentatious all his career, going out of the world without a thought that his ostentation will be blown away like chaff, by the breath of God, and that he will have to stand shivering before his Maker, with his life behind him wasted in display, and no fruit brought to perfection. You are set in this world to grow as corn, to bring forth according to your several capacities. Think what it must be, at the Last Great Day, to have to confess that you have brought forth nothing.

When next you go through the cornfield, remem-

ber the great lesson it preaches to you—live for practical fruit, not for empty display; live for to-morrow, not for to-day Look to the seed-time, not to the flowering. This century in which we live is especially one of idle ostentation, in dress, in display of wealth, in everything You will therefore be specially subject to the temptation to live as poppies, blue bottle and cockle, not as wheat. Think of that each harvest time, and let it nerve you to work out your salvation, and shun vanity.

SERMON XX.

EVERGREENS.

(WINTER.)

2 TIMOTHY II. 3.

"*Thou therefore endure hardness.*"

THE snow is on the ground. God has spread a sheet of white over the country, and buried the brown earth. When the sun comes out, every bar of a gate, and thorn spray in the hedge, glitters as though encrusted with diamonds. The road flashes and sparkles. The cold sparrows, as they hop about among the bushes and trees, send down a shower of silver. Robins come to the window, and ask for bread crumbs. The mice run about in the walls, and cower under the thatch where they can find warmth. The trees are bare; their gaunt arms are leafless, their crowns of green are cast at their feet, and are rotted or rotting away. The birds which trusted in them, found shelter in them, and

thought to live snug among their foliage all the long winter, have found out their mistake, and desert the naked boughs and bare twigs, and you can see the exposed nests, now choked up with snow, in the exposed branches. They fly to the ivy and the fir trees, and find a refuge under their dark and somewhat dismal leaves. They despised them all the summer. The dove cooed out of the oak, and the linnet sang out of the elm trees, and the nightingale poured forth his lay from the poplars and beech. But now oak and elm are stripped, and the poplar is naked, and only a few russet leaves rustle on the beech. But the despised pines are full of leaf as in summer, they offer shelter to the birds turned by cruel winter out of house and home, and say, "Trust us, we fear not the cold, we will brave "the stormy winds and the keen frost. We will "not shed our spines. Our little needle-like leaves "are very fine, and do not seem to offer much pro- "tection, but they will break the icy blast, and "they will hang on and hang together all winter "through, and you will be warm among them. "Therefore trust us, whom in the summer you "lightly esteemed."

Once upon a time, three children had gardens apportioned them, and an aunt made each of them

a present of a little tree in a large green box to set in the garden, and adorn it. The spring came, and the eldest looked at her tree, it was thrusting forth bright green leaves, and then long drooping chains of little knobs began to swing from the dry branches. One warm day all these little chains showed like gold. The sun shone on them, and it was a lovely sight. The child shouted with joy. It was like a fairy tree, and was hung with chains more beautiful than those of a lord mayor. She picked them, and wound them round her head, and twisted them in her hair, and let them hang down beside her ears, and not the Queen of Sheba in all her glory was crowned like this little child. Her tree was the laburnum. Spring passed, and the yellow flowers withered, and only leaves remained, and they were duller green than before, and, in place of flowers, long pods in which the seed matured. With summer the tree belonging to the second child opened its buds, and a sweet scent was diffused around. Her's was a rose tree Her's was the queen of flowers, the most beautiful, the sweetest scented of all All through the summer it bloomed. She picked off the fairest flowers, and then others came. It went on blossoming, whilst the laburnum was flowerless. Then came autumn, and the pink petals fell off, but there

came in their places pods which turned as scarlet as coral.

Now the third child had got only a little fir tree. In spring and summer she looked every day at it, hoping that it too would have flowers like the laburnum, but all she saw were little tufts, of no beauty at all, and these her father told her were the blossom of the tree. She cried, full of disappointment, but thought when the rose began to show its scarlet pods that perhaps her tree might also produce beautiful berries. But no! the top was hung with little brown dry cones. These were its fruit, and there was no beauty in them.

Presently the frosts came on, and a wintry wind swept over the face of the earth. The laburnum shed its leaves, and its dry pods hung like old brown rags upon the bare twigs. The rose lost all its leaves, and with the frost the scarlet hips fell off, and shrivelled on the ground. But the little fir maintained its dark green leaf. The storm had no effect on it, the frost did not strip it, it stood bravely out when the snow began to fall, and remained green when all other trees were bare.

At last came Christmas Eve. The children had not been allowed out for some days, the weather was too cold. The sun had set, and the long winter

night had begun. Then suddenly the doors of the study were thrown open, and the children were brought into a brilliantly lighted room. There they saw the little fir tree with tapers burning on every branch, and gilt nuts, and oranges, and glittering crackers, and red, blue, yellow bags full of comfits, and presents of all sorts hanging among the sombre green of the tree. The little fir tree was glorified: it was beautiful beyond what the children could have expected! They shouted for joy, and clapped their hands. But above all, that little girl rejoiced whose tree it was. She had wept over it in spring, and autumn, and summer, her little fir had seemed so mean beside the golden laburnum and the crimson rose, and now—when laburnum and rose were shivering, bared of leaves, outside in the cold winter's night—her tree, covered with all its rich green hair, was covered with stars, glittering with gold, and hanging with beautiful and precious fruit, such as no laburnum or rose ever bore.

Little Christians! I desire you to take a lesson from the evergreen fir, the lesson to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. You must not expect that all will go smoothly with you in life, that your Christian walk is to be a summer-day jaunt. If you are enrolled in Christ's army, and

made soldiers under His standard, it is to fight, not to be merely on parade every day Now even in childhood all will not go smoothly with you; you will have disappointments, you will be obliged to yield your wishes to others, you will have to struggle against little tempers. But you ought to remember that this is your calling. You are not called to idleness, to ease, to play, but to endure hardness, to work, to battle for Christ. Sharp frosts will come and nip you, fierce winds will rage and shake you, but you must remain steadfast, and not be discouraged. You were called to be evergreens in God's garden, called to bear your leaves in winter as in summer, called to be Christmas trees in His heavenly mansions.

Christ was one day hungry, and He came to a fig tree, and sought among the leaves for food, but found no fruit, only broad leaves. Then He cursed the tree, and it withered away. The tree was unprofitable, it had only leaves, no fruit. He seeks of you to bear your green leaves all the year, in every season, in all weathers; and He will not take you into His glorious home unless you do. You must be Christians always, in adversity as in prosperity, in time of trial as in time of peace.

Your Christian faith is a most precious blessing,

and you cannot expect to keep it without having to pay for it. A responsibility attaches to everything we have here. If we have riches, we must use precautions not to lose them. If you have a pearl necklace, you cannot leave it littering about, or it may be stolen, or the string may break and the pearls roll away and be lost. So with your Christian belief. You must guard it well, treasure it, or it will be taken from you, or you will lose the little pearly truths of which it is made up, and which will drop from you and roll off, without your noticing or knowing when and whither they went.

I dare say you have observed what iron bars there are before the windows of banks. Besides, in a bank there is generally some one watching up all night, lest robbers should break in, and steal the notes and gold preserved there. You are little banks. You have the precious gold of Divine grace, lodged in the strong box of your heart, and holy childish innocence, and the Christian faith. All these are there, in your hearts. And outside there are plenty who would like to steal them. But you must put up bars, and keep watch. You must be careful to preserve what you have. If you do not value and keep that which you have, God will not commit to your trust more riches.

There was once a boy called Tarsicius. It was in time of persecution at Rome, and many martyrs were languishing in dungeons The priests were not allowed by the jailors to visit them, and the suffering Christians greatly desired to be strengthened with the Body of Christ for their coming struggle with wild beasts in the amphitheatre. So the Holy Communion was enclosed in a little silver box, and hung round the boy's neck, and he was sent to gain admittance to the prisons, and thus convey the Bread of Life to the martyrs. On his way through the streets, some vile fellow, suspecting him to be a Christian, assaulted him ; and catching him by the throat tore open his garment, and exposed the silver box. The boy at once covered it with his hands, and struggled to save it from the profane touch of a gathering rabble. They asked him what it contained, he would not answer. They tried to take it from him by force. He resisted manfully. Then they took stones and struck him, but he would not let go, and they beat him to death before they could unlock his fingers from the precious deposit given him. This was one who endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

You also, every one of you, have got a sacred deposit—The holy Catholic Faith committed to you

as a trust. You will, I doubt not, find as you go through life that you also will be assaulted, and meet with rude jibes, and many a buffet, to make you give up your trust. But hold fast your profession of faith. Let no man take it from you by violence, or laugh you out of your stedfastness, that you surrender it in false shame. Hold fast in war as in peace, hold fast in adversity, hold fast at all times. "Be thou faithful unto death," says Christ, "and I will give thee a crown of life."

I daresay you will not be as much thought of, as much will not be made of you in this life because you are consistent Christians, as if you gave way, and lived for this world, and not for the next. Men make much more count of what is transient than of what endures. The children thought much more of the laburnum and the rose than of the little fir tree. But the time will come when all that which has pleased the world, and caught men's eye, and evoked their praise, will have fallen away like the golden drops of the laburnum and the red petals of the rose, and then it will be those who have been stedfast, who have borne their modest leaf in storm as in shine, in cold as in heat, who will be wondered at and resorted to.

"Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the

"counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of "sinners : and hath not sat in the seat of the scorn- "ful—his leaf shall not wither: and look, whatsoever "he doeth, it shall prosper." He will be a green fir tree in the House of His God, planted by the stream of grace, and bringing forth his humble fruit, which is not indeed showy, in due season. When all those who have made great professions, all those who have cut a great figure in the world, all those who have lived for the praise of men, shall stand bare and destitute in the winter day of judgment, then shall the good man who has lived as a sincere Christian shew green and prosperous, with unwithered leaf, and be transplanted to the glorious courts of heaven.

SERMON XXI.

THE LION AND THE BEAR.

1 SAM. XVII. 36.

"Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear."

DAVID was a shepherd boy, keeping the sheep of his father Jesse, on the hill sides near Bethlehem. A lion came one day on the flock, and carried off a lamb. Then David pursued the beast, caught him by his beard, "and smote him, and "slew him." On another occasion a bear threatened the sheep, and David killed him also.

That was the beginning of his eventful career. His first battles were with a lion and a bear. His next with the Philistine Goliath, and after that with many enemies, with the Amalekites, the Philistines, the Moabites, the Syrians, the Edomites, and others.

It seems to me, children,—especially you, boys, that you have two enemies to contend with in your

youth,—violence and bearishness. Until you have conquered these you will not have proved yourselves worthy to go against greater foes; and if you allow yourselves to be mastered by these when you are children, you never will be able to stand against others.

When you go out into life, you will meet with many and sore temptations. Like David you will be called to be a man of war from your youth. You will have the Devil, and the Flesh, and the World against you, all seeking your ruin. If you think to have a life of peace, you are much mistaken. "Is there not," asked Job, "a warfare to man upon "earth "?*

Violence of temper is the lion with which you have to fight.

Angry psssions are the first passions that assail you. In your play, you cannot have everything that you like; or something said or done by another makes your blood boil, and your cheek flame. Anger is natural; and in itself is not wrong. But it is sinful when it masters you. When a lion is in a cage, and allowed no opportunity of tearing and killing, you do not fear him, but when he breaks out of the cage, then everyone takes to flight.

* Job vii. 1. (*Margin*).

Anger is not wrong when the cause is just, the feeling moderate, and the desire of punishment proportioned to the offence.

"Be ye angry," says S. Paul, "and sin not."

Living, as we do, in the midst of wickedness and injustice, we cannot fail to be angry when we see or feel injustice and wrong. We resent it, because our conscience proclaims what is right, and sees a violation of the right. You are struck a blow, or called an offensive name, or something of yours is snatched from you and spoiled wilfully. You are angry, because the blow and name are undeserved, and the thing spoiled is maliciously spoiled. I do not say that it is wrong to be angry under such circumstances. On the contrary, I say it is very natural that you should be angry. But supposing your passion overmasters you, and in a fit of fury you rush on the boy who has thus treated you, and kick and beat him savagely,—then the anger is sinful. It is excessive, and it has overmastered you.

Again, supposing you have done another an injury, and he retaliates, and calls you a sneak, or boxes your ears, you have deserved it,—the punishment is unpleasant, but it is your due, and you have no right to be angry, except with yourself.

There is an old fable of a lion going into a town, and what attracted his attention at once was a marble statue of a man standing over a lion which he had quelled, and which he threatened with his sword. "Ah!" said the beast to a citizen who was passing, "This is the way in which you represent "the battle. If we lions had set up the statue, the "man would be prostrate, and the king of the "animals standing over him ready to devour him." The statue the lion saw represents the position in which the angry passions always should be, controlled, held under, awed by the reason. It is only in a savage state that passion masters man.

S. Paul gives a good piece of advice about anger. He says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." That is, if you have been angry, justly or unjustly, conquer the passion, and make up friends if possible, before you go to sleep. There was a very holy patriarch of Alexandria, called John. The governor of Alexandria had imposed a tax on the city which fell with peculiar severity on the poor, whilst the rich got off with comparative ease. The patriarch went to the governor, whose name was Nicetas, and remonstrated with him. Nicetas was furious. He stormed against the bishop, and pursued him to his own house and inner chamber,

uttering fierce abuse. He had completely lost control over himself, so great was his anger at the prelate's interference. John was much agitated and distressed. He waited all the afternoon, praying for a reconciliation, but not another word had he with the governor. As evening drew on, he became still more uneasy. He felt he could not sleep with the bitterness subsisting between them. So he wrote on a slip of parchment the words "*The sun is setting*," and sent it to Nicetas, who, recalling the maxim of S. Paul, was moved to regret his violence, and he hasted to the residence of the patriarch, asked his pardon, and their broken friendship was restored.

Our Lord bids us love our enemies. No doubt this is not an easy thing to do, so long as passion has the mastery over us, but if we master it, then this is not difficult. So with forgiveness of injuries. We pray that God will forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others that trespass against us. It is not an easy thing thus to forgive, but unless we forgive others the wrongs they have done us, we shall not be forgiven by God the wrongs we have done Him. Now if we conquer our lion, and hold him down, and stand over him—if, I mean, we manage to master our angry passion, and control it so that it

cannot rise, and burst forth and rend and devour, then we shall not find it so difficult to forgive as is supposed Keep the wild passion in chains and the Christian graces and virtues will come easy enough. But let it loose, and they will be unattainable.

Remember this! either you must stand over the lion, or the lion will stand over you. Either you must conquer your violent temper, or your violent temper will conquer you.

The other enemy you have to contend with is Bearishness.

The greatest charm in a boy is politeness, or civility; and this is not so often met with as one could wish. Boys and girls are now allowed so much liberty, that they behave everywhere, and at all times, and before all people, as though they had only themselves to consider, and as if they owed no consideration, respect, or deference, to their elders and betters.

It used to be said that bears never allowed their cubs to be seen out of the cave in which they were born until they had licked them into shape, for infant bear cubs were misformed hideous little beasts, but the mother by pains, and constant licking, got them into something like shape Rabbits, as you know, will not allow their little ones to be seen till they are

sightly objects. I am afraid that too many little human bear cubs are allowed out before they are licked into shape. Now what is the cause of bearishness? of cubbishness? It is, in the first place, thought of self. The boy or girl whose mind is fixed on self is sure not to have thought of the wants and wishes of others, and to be without the respect due to others.

In the upper classes of society it would be thought so disgraceful for ladies and gentlemen to turn out bear cubs into the world, that they are obliged to lick them into shape, and make them learn "manners." They have to teach them how to do this or that, and not to do this nor that. So the children grow up without bearish manners, but it does not follow that they have not bear-cub hearts within. They are taught not to make a noise in the presence of their elders, not to interrupt conversation, nor turn from those who speak to them, to make way for others to go before them into a room or through a gate, to take off the hat to a superior and on entering a house, to answer a question modestly, and so on. They learn all these little matters as they learn music, and French, and dancing They put on these manners as they put on their clothes. But it would be much better if the Bear were killed, instead

of being hidden in a cupboard. It too often happens with those who have been taught to be polite and courteous, without being taught also to conquer the evil principle which lies at the root of cubbishness, that on occasions the bad beast breaks out, bursts through all restraints, and then we see that gentle manner was put on, and is not real. The bear is in the cupboard and hidden, but it is alive and impatient of restraint, and takes the first opportunity to show itself.

When S. Paul tells you, "Be ye kind one to "another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another," and "Render unto all their dues, tribute to whom "tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to "whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no "man anything, but to love one another,"—he is telling you how to kill the bear.

Try to be gentle in manner, considerate of the failings and requirements of others, respectful to your elders and betters, kind to your companions, thoughtful of what your parents need; try to save others trouble, try to help others in their difficulties, try to be patient with those who are a little trying; avoid forwardness of manner, all self-conceit, boasting, all uproariousness, roughness, and incivility, and you will be killing the bear.

Selfishness is the mother of bearishness. If you persist in seeking self, thinking of self, pushing everyone aside to make way for self, then you will be nurturing the bear, and the bear will so master you that when you go out into life the bear will hold you by a chain, and lead you about.

If the lion be feared, the bear is loathed. It is a disgusting brute. And the bearish child is a most offensive child, and grows up into a most offensive man or woman.

Bearishness is exactly the reverse of what should be the character of a Christian. The Christian religion softens, and refines, it teaches all to be kindly to one another, to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous. No selfish, rude, rough, impudent child is like the child Jesus, and the man or woman who lives for self and disregards others, carries in his or her life no trace of resemblance to the life on earth of Him who came to set an example how we should walk.

Satan himself will assail you, when you grow older, you will have to fight with him, if you are Christ's soldier, as David had to fight with Goliath. But if you have not first fought with and conquered the lion of violent temper, and the bear of rude manners, you will not be able to resist him. He

will easily overcome and destroy you. Jesus Christ is called the Lamb of God, because in Him was no wrath, and no roughness. Try to be gentle as the lamb, resist and overcome passion, and master Bearishness. Then you will be like Christ, and like David, you will be able to conquer greater enemies, and our Lord Himself will help you, for He will see in you His likeness, and will own you as one of His disciples, one of those who "follow the Lamb, "whithersoever He goeth."

SERMON XXII.

INDISCREET CURIOSITY.

GEN. III. 6, 7.

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked."

I SUPPOSE that the life of Adam and Eve in Eden was one of quite unclouded happiness. They were as joyous as the sun was bright and nature was fair, and they were as happy as the day was long. They had nothing to trouble them The trees brought forth abundance of fruit, the springs afforded them cool drink, the leafy forests pleasant shade. They had the best companionship in one another, and they had all the animals for play-things. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, on which they could renew their strength day by day; they feared not death, they felt no

pain, sorrow drew no tears from their eyes. They laughed, and talked, and sang, and sought out new things, new flowers, new insects, new birds, new shells, new animals. There was always something fresh to interest them every day. There seemed no end to their pleasure.

But unfortunately Eve was not satisfied. There was also in the garden the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, that is, a tree, the fruit of which would enable her to know what naughtiness was, and to distinguish evil from good. She was curious to taste. She wanted to know what was naughty, not certainly that she wanted to practise it, but that she might know about it. As she sat under the trees, or wandered about in the grass, picking the wild tulips and narcissus, the idea had been haunting her, "What can evil be? What is that "naughtiness which I know nothing about, but "which I should understand, if I tasted the fruit "of the tree?" I daresay that she discussed it with her husband. I daresay she said to him, "What can God have meant, when He said that "the tree gave the knowledge of good and evil? "Good I understand. God is good, the grape, and "the apple, and the apricot are good; the jessa-"mine, and the rose, and the lily are good, the

"shade of the trees is good on a hot day; the bub-
"bling fountain is good when I am thirsty; night
"is good when I am tired; but what can evil
"mean? I should like to know, just to know. I
"should not wish to do what is evil, but to know
"what it is like."

So she had no rest till she found out, and had made Adam find out also. They knew at last what evil was.

What effect did the knowledge have on them? It cast them out of Paradise. It darkened their lives. Shame, absence from God, sorrow, pain, were the result. When their ignorance of evil was at an end, their simplicity was gone. And with their simplicity went the sunniness of their spirits. The world had been Paradise as long as they knew not evil, with the ugly knowledge Eden became a recollection only They soon knew care, conscience spoke, and drove them among the bushes from the eyes of God, ugly thoughts, like toads and stinging reptiles, began to. wriggle in their minds, as in a rank garden, and though they did not do the things they thought of, yet still the loathsome thoughts were there, spoiling with their slime and venom all the beautiful flowers that there bloomed They had sorrow in their children. They saw envy and

hatred, and its deadly fruit, murder. And lastly they themselves felt the pain of death.

You, children, are all placed in a garden of Eden. You are all in happy innocence, and your young life is one of joyousness. We older people look on at your play, we hear your merry laughter, and see you delight over trifles; and we know, if you do not, that you are now in Eden. You know nothing, or only very little, of good and evil; you have tasted but a very little of that tree. We can see it in your unclouded brows, in your laughing eyes.

But, children, you are all tempted, drawn by idle curiosity to the fatal tree. You are inquisitive to know of evil, you are eager to learn what is naughty, to peer into what is hidden, to bite at the forbidden fruit. Now I do not tell you that you can pass through life without a knowledge of evil. It is not possible. You must know something of evil. But you need not know everything about it. You need not be inquisitive about it.

Sin should be shunned as a serpent; but so also should the acquaintance with sin. A labourer took a snake into his house, because it lay frozen outside in the snow, and he cherished it by his hearth. Then the reptile began to stir, and recover animation, and to move its head, and then suddenly, it

turned and fastened its teeth in the hand of the man who had harboured it Evil is harmless so long as you let it lie outside in the cold. But if you take it into your heads, and let it lie by the fire of your warm hearts, it will thaw, and acquire activity, and before you are aware, will sting you, and you will do the evil which before you only knew of. No one is likely to desire to do that which is forbidden, unless he first knows about it. Consequently, it is one of the best protections against sin, to be ignorant of the way in which sin may be committed.

Then, again, the acquisition of knowledge of evil saddens the life. You will find, dear children, that the more you know of evil, the less of joy will be yours. The knowledge of evil somehow darkens the heart, so that it is no more bright. It is like thick November clouds passing over the sky, all life is grey, and dull, and hard, and vulgar, when the knowledge of sin obscures its blue sky. The sunshine of God's presence is no longer so perceptible. It does not pierce the cloudy canopy. We can still see under a veil of vapour, but it is no longer a bright and joyous light The more you know of evil, the deeper will grow the sadness of your hearts. Boisterous merriment may take the place of innocent

mirth, but it is a very different thing. It is artificial, not real, sham flowers not real blossoms.

King Solomon made two hundred targets of gold, six hundred shekels of gold went to each target, and three hundred shields of purest beaten gold, three pounds of gold went to each shield, and hung them up in the house in Lebanon that he had made. But after some years Shishak came and carried off all the golden shields and targets that adorned the house in Lebanon, and Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields. It is so in life. You children are adorned with the golden shields of gladness, and innocence, and simplicity, and childish trust, and tender love, and many and many another beautiful and shining grace, by the hands of your God and King. But Satan comes and robs you of them. Gladness of heart, innocence of intention, guilelessness of spirit, openness of manner, purity of soul, fearlessness, simple faith, all go—and alas! in their stead are only brazen imitations,—noisy mirth, prudishness, impudence, boldness. Brass is poor substitute for gold; the affectation of ignorance for innocence, put-on modesty for genuine bashfulness, pertness for openness, impudence for fearlessness.

Take care, my children, how you allow brass to

take the place of gold in the adornment of your character, but first, take care not to part with the gold. Preserve, treasure, the golden gifts of innocence, the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit, which are in the sight of God of great price ; when original innocence goes, then only brazen makeshifts take its place.

Avoid too great curiosity. Take an interest in all that is good, in all that is beautiful : "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, "whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are "pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever "things are of good report, if there be any virtue, "and if there be any praise,"—enquire into them, for then you are searching into the deep things of God, but shun searching into the deep things of the devil It can do you no good prying into evil, and it may, it must do you much harm. Into clear water you may look and watch the darting fish, and count the glittering pebbles, but if you peer into the oozy stagnant pond, fever and ague will rise from its foul depths and cast you on the bed of sickness.

You are vastly mistaken if you think that the knowledge of evil will make you happier. That it never, never does. It will inevitably make you sadder. It will take the bloom off your heart, light

out of your eyes, laughter from your lips. I have heard the story told of a certain noble family, that in the castle is a small closet of which the lord possesses the key. No one ever enters that chamber but the master of the place. On the father's death-bed the key is given to the heir. The heir, however gay-hearted he may have been, when possessed of the knowledge of what is in that closet becomes sad, and all the brightness goes out of his life. The secret remains locked up in his own breast,no one in the family knows it but the lord of the castle, and it weighs on, and darkens his whole life. Children! in the mansion of this world there are mysterious closets, and the keys are sooner or later placed in your hands Let me warn you in time, avoid putting them in the locks, and peering in. There will issue from these closets something which will taint and blight your souls, or at all events something which will age them and weigh them down.

I have seen old men, sunny and happy as children, and in every case, this bright joy of declining years has been due to a childlike heart, an innocence of soul, an ignorance of evil, preserved through life. The knowledge of evil may have come to them, but they have not groped and peered into it. Children! may it be so through life with you.

SERMON XXIII.

THE PILLAR OF FIRE.

(FIRST COMMUNION.)

EXODUS XIII. 21, 22.

"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

THAT took place as soon as the Israelites had taken up the bones of Joseph, and had started on their journey to the land of promise,—or rather, let me say, as soon as they had reached the edge of the wilderness at Etham. The two first stages, from Rameses to Succoth, and from Succoth to Etham, they went without the pillar, but at Etham they were on the edge of the wilderness. Before them stretched the barren, stony waste, with low sand hills, brown and treeless, and far away a ridge of

bare rock, without a patch of green on its sides. There was no road here, the wilderness lay spread before them like the sea, and they had no guide. They had passed the last inhabited village, with its meadows and cornfields, and rills of water diverted from the Nile; the last clump of date trees was at Etham, and they pitched upon the last green turf. The road died away in the desert: a few camel tracks were visible, but the wind speedily brushed them over with sand, as the sea waves obliterate footprints on the shore.

How were the people to find their way in the unexplored waste, how to take the right road to the land of Promise? In the night there flashed on their eyes a streak of light, standing up like a pillar before them, to the East. And when morning dawned it was there still, only shadowy, as a cloud, and it moved forward, and led the way across the sandy desert. When the children of Israel came to Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon, they saw the sea rippling in front and, beyond, the Arabian coast, with its rocky mountain ranges shining white in the sun. And the pillar of cloud stood at the water's edge, as though leading them into the sea Presently they heard shouts in their rear, and saw rising a cloud of dust; then, rolling down the hill

slopes, was visible a glittering torrent of armed men. Pharoah and his host were in pursuit.

"And when Pharoah drew nigh, the children of "Israel lifted up their eyes, and they were sore "afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto "the Lord. And they said unto Moses, Because "there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken "us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast "thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of "Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell "thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may "serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for "us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die "in the wilderness."

Then Moses said to the murmuring people, "Fear "ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the "Lord, which He will shew to you to-day: for the "Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see "them again no more for ever. The Lord shall "fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Then the pillar of the cloud moved from before the people and went behind them, and came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and spread out, forming a thick black veil of mist or smoke, through which the Egyptians could not see. But it shone brightly over the Israelites all the

night, so that they had light in their dwellings, whilst the Egyptians groped in darkness. "It "was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave "light by night to these; so that the one came not "near the other all the night." "Then Moses "stretched out his hand over the sea, and it divi- "ded, and the children of Israel went into the midst "of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters "were a wall to them on their right hand and on "their left. And when the Egyptians pursued, "and went in after them into the midst of the "sea: in the morning watch the Lord looked unto "the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of "fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the "Egyptians." And the sea returned, and swept over them, and drowned them all.

As the children of Israel went through the wilderness of Sinai, the fiery cloud still attended them. "On the day that the Tabernacle was reared up, "the cloud covered the tabernacle; and at even "there was upon the tabernacle as it were the "appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was "alway: the cloud covered it by day, and the appear- "ance of fire by night. And when the cloud was "taken up from the tabernacle, then, after that, the "children of Israel journeyed: and in the place

"where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel "pitched their tents."

There is reason to believe that the pillar of cloud and fire was that which rose ever from the altar of burnt sacrifice. But it was not, as we have seen, merely that. There was the human offering, the smoke and flame of which went up to heaven, but there was more than that,—there was God in it, present, illuminating, guiding, blessing. The natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine were united. Man brought the sacrifice, God consecrated and accepted it. Man in the sacrifice pleaded his unworthiness, his weakness, his ignorance: God in the sacrifice came to give His presence to strengthen, and lead, and lighten.

So is it now, in the Church of God. Christ has promised, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto "the end of the world," and He keeps His promise. He is with us. If the Israelites needed the guidance and illumination of God in their journey through the wilderness, so do we in our pilgrimage through life. He did not leave the old people under the old covenant destitute, but came to them, and dwelt with them He will not leave us, His new elect, under the new covenant, without His presence. We cannot be treated more hardly than they. He has

promised, and His promise He will surely perform, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of "the world." What a promise is that! Is it not performed? My children, indeed it is. As in the sacrifice of old, in the journey from Egypt to Canaan, God guided and shone on His people out of the smoke, so does He still. As then His presence was above the altar, so is it now. It is in the Holy Eucharist that our God is present. In the Holy Eucharist the promise is fulfilled. The Holy Eucharist is our pillar of fire and cloud, to enlighten and guide. The Holy Eucharist is our pledge of God's presence with His Church. We bring our poor oblations—bread and wine—and Christ shines out of and through them, making them His very Body and Blood.

My children! you have come to the edge of the wilderness, you are now encamped in Etham. Behind you is the pleasant land of infancy, before you the unknown waste of manhood and womanhood. There are various ways in that wilderness, ravenous beasts, and barren wastes without water; you can hardly traverse it in safety without a guide. If you wander in it without a guide, you will lay your bones there, and never enter into the promised country flowing with milk and honey; you will be

led astray by mirages, and become lost among the sand hills, or torn by wild beasts, or starved through want of food.

To-day the pillar of cloud and fire takes its place before you. To-day you are showed a guide for your journey, even Christ Jesus, your Lord and God, present amongst you, come to His camp, to lead you and to enlighten you in the Sacrament of the altar.

My children! you must not suppose that the Presence in the Holy Eucharist is visible to all. To those who are outside the Church, and to all who have not faith, and to all who war against the Truth, it is a cloud and darkness. You will hear, as you go through life, much disputing and great blasphemy against the Presence of Christ in the camp of the true Israel. You will hear men deny and scoff at the Presence; those who do so are Egyptians, they do not see the light, they see only darkness; and the Lord will look on them through the cloud and trouble them, and finally involve them in destruction, as He did Pharoah and all his host. But you, if you have faith, if you are ready to follow the guidance of God; you, if you have trust in the promises of God,—you will see the bright shining of the light, you will recognize the

presence of your Saviour, He will infallibly manifest Himself to you, as He did to the disciples at Emmaus, in the Breaking of Bread. It is only those who are born of the Spirit, who are spiritually minded, who can discern spiritual things; the worldly, carnal-minded, cannot see these things, they are hid from their eyes. Divine things are revealed only to those who are living a divine life. To all others they are cloud and darkness. Remember this! Never forget it! Those who deny the Presence of God in the Holy Eucharist, do so because the god of this world has blinded their eyes. They are Egyptians, and see only cloud and darkness. But do you live in prayer and in communion with God: live to the Spirit and not to the flesh, and you will discern the things of the Spirit. Live to God, and you will see God,—see Him here, in His pillar of fire, where others see only smoke.

Again,—take Christ, in His Blessed Sacrament, as your light and your guide through life. When you are in any trouble, when any shadow has fallen on you, any desolation, when you feel your ignorance and are in doubt, flee to the altar, look to Christ. Appeal to Him in that Sacrament in which He is ever present with His Church, and the light from Him will shine into your heart, and the dark-

ness will roll away, and you will see clear. In the Holy Communion you will find illumination in all your darkness. However dark may be the night that falls on you, however hopeless, despairing, disconsolate, bewildered you may feel, if you will only turn to the Holy Communion, and seek your light there, you will most assuredly find it.

And so also will you find Christ, in this Holy Sacrament, your guide. In the way of life there are many paths, many tracks leading in all sorts of directions: very promising some are, and your judgments are very likely to be unsettled. You do not know which is right, which is best to be taken. Say—the choice of a profession; or, what often happens, the decision between two courses, each of which offers success, or seems as advantageous as the other. The human judgment is at fault, you have not materials out of which to form a determination. And yet the whole future current of your life will depend on your choice, on the direction you will give it. Under such circumstances, go to the altar of God, go to the Blessed Sacrament, and commit the case to Him who has come into the camp to be the guide of every Israelite, pray to Him, and then make your decision, and never fear, the pillar will have led you aright.

Never, never, now that you have taken the pillar of cloud and fire for your guide, never, never, I repeat, desert it. Keep by the pillar, follow it, and it will lead you safely to the promised land. Try to live without the Holy Communion, to shape your course, to grope your way by the light of your own understanding, without Divine illumination, and you will go wrong. You will miss the right way, and you will fall into darkness. If you estrange yourself from the pillar, if you give up the guidance and illumination of the Holy Communion, you will gradually lose the power of perception of its light, from you will be withdrawn the capacity of discerning the Divine Glory of the Presence of the Son of God shining out of it, and it will be to you but a cloud of darkness.

Now to Thee, Blessed Jesus,
We our anthems of praise,
On this glad Sunday morning
Will unitedly raise.

Thou didst come in all meekness,
Of a pure Mother-Maid,
In our flesh, in our weakness,
And in manger wast laid.

Then the Jews looking on Thee,
Of Thy majesty shorn,
Said, "Is this the Messiah?"
And they laughed Thee to scorn.

But Thine own ones around Thee
Bent, and kneeling, adored
Thee of Lights the true glory,
Very man, very Lord.

Now behold Thou art coming
To our altar below,
And though worldlings perceive not,
We the presence shall know.

Though Thou veilest Thy glory,
Com'st in lowliest guise,
Yet by faith we discern Thee
Hidden from carnal eyes.

Son of Mary we greet Thee,
For our faith bids us trace
Both Thy Manhood and Godhead,
Hid in elements base.

At the great Resurrection,
When all shadows are past,
We shall see Thee unveiled
In Thy splendour at last.

THE END.

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